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MATCH PLAY AND THE SPIN OF THE BALL

ME—THE HANDICAP

GLORY'S NET

BY

WILLIAM T. TILDEN, 2ND

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TO AUNTIE

Mary Elizabeth Hey

and

TWIN

Selena G. Hey

to whose love and belief in me
this book owes its being

BILLY

WM. T. TILDEN, 2nd

FOREWORD

This little story makes no pretence to do more than tell a simple romance of simple people. If in so doing I have given an inside glimpse into the workings of amateur sport, it is because the lives of my characters are touched by them. Many great figures of the sporting and artistic world appear by name in this story. I ask their indulgence for the use of their names, which are used in admiration of their prominence. All characters that run throughout the story are fictional and not intended to represent any actual person.

Wm. T. Tilden, 2nd

GLORY'S NET

CHAPTER I

"FINAL round, championship of the United States. Robert Davis of New York, defending champion and member of the American Davis Cup Team, versus David Cooper of Hobansville, Ill."

It seemed but a moment, yet also an age, since the voice of the man in the big umpire's chair had rung in the ears of the girl and the small boy sitting far up in the crowded concrete horseshoe at the West Side Tennis Club, Long Island. Actually it had been two long hours of tense watching since the umpire had introduced the players, two hours of thrills, joy, and agony, for on the court was the fiancé of one, the brother of the other, fighting for the championship of the United States.

It seemed only a moment ago when they had fought their way into the great concrete

crescent, crowded now to its capacity with the brilliant gallery that sat, now silent, now cheering at the match below. It seemed just this minute that the linesmen had taken their places, and amid a howl of greeting the two players, immaculate in their white clothes, had stepped down to the court and faced the battery of cameras and moving picture machines that awaited them. The great gallery of fifteen thousand yelling in its excitement faded from the ken of Mary Jones and Billy Cooper, who had eyes only for that figure stepping out upon the velvety green carpet of the championship court. It was their David and he was playing for them. For two hours these two had sat silent and breathless, watching the tide of battle on the court below fluctuate and vary until now the crisis was at hand.

* * *

Bob Davis, the national champion, was nonplussed. In fact he was more than that. He was worried. Here he was, undisputed tennis champion of the world, carried to 3 all in the fifth and final set for the championship of the

United States by a young upstart from the Middle West of whom he had never heard until two days before. Still worse, the young upstart did not seem to realize he was beaten, but had an air of cocky confidence that spoke volumes of his belief that he was going to win. The national champion set his teeth grimly. Two sets lost were bad enough, but to have this cheeky kid not recognize the inevitable and bow gracefully to his fate in the fifth set was adding insult to injury.

David Cooper, the cheeky upstart from the Middle West, was himself filled with ideas of the moment. All through the week, when, unnoticed by press and public alike, he had travelled along a path to the finals, made easy by the unexpected default of René Lacoste, the great French star, and the sudden illness of Francis T. Hunter, during which journey he was "discovered" only when, in the semi-final match, he defeated George M. Lott, Jr., in four sets—all through the week he had been hoping, wishing, almost praying to meet the national champion. He had never believed he could win from the title-holder, but he wanted to find out what the best in the world could

do to him when it was necessary. Naturally the daily press "discovered" him following his defeat of Lott. His career to date was retold in detail, the only sad part for the press being the absence of any story to tell. This was his first national championship, worse yet for the sporting writers it was only his third tournament in the East. None of the New York tennis writers had any knowledge of any players who had not played in New York, Boston, or Philadelphia. They never have. One writer remembered the name of David Cooper vaguely as having once won the Western Championship some three years before, but the fact that Cooper had beaten Hennessey, Lott, and Alonso in succession had slipped his memory. Cooper, who was the Dark Horse of the tournament, was now hailed as the Darkest Dark Horse ever seen at Forest Hills.

The match itself had proved almost as much of a surprise to David as to the national champion. He had gone on the court, facing the packed stands in which were crowded fifteen thousand cheering tennis fans, feeling just a little like a lamb led to the slaughter. He didn't mind fourteen thousand nine hundred

and ninety-eight of the gallery at all, but there were two in that stand he couldn't face if he failed miserably in this his first big chance to make good. His first and last chance, he told himself, for never again would he come East to play tennis. It was too expensive for his modest means. Somewhere in that cheering mob sat his fourteen-year-old brother Billy—and—he drew a long breath—Mary Jones. Her name rang in his head. Mary! Mary! Mary! Only two days before he left for the East he found courage to ask her a question that he had known for five years he was going to ask her and never did, until this epochal journey East made their parting for three weeks so terrible that he blurted out the question, and then almost died of fright during the half-minute pause before she said "Yes." She had said it calmly, quietly, and with great definiteness, because she too had waited five years to answer that question which she had known he would some day ask, and by now there was no doubt in her mind about her answer. Then suddenly, with no warning to him, yesterday after he had beaten Lott and returned to the Vanderbilt Hotel where he

was staying, she and her father had appeared at his elbow in the lobby. Now She (he always thought of her with a capital S) was in the stand expecting him to win, and he was on the court playing the national champion for the tennis championship of the United States.

His kid brother Billy was another he couldn't throw down. The boy, he knew, adored him with a worship almost sacrilegious in its intensity. Billy believed David to be not only the greatest tennis player in the world, but also "the greatest guy." The kid had begged so hard to come on to see him win in the East that Dave, though fearing to disappoint him, hadn't the heart to leave him back home in Illinois.

David had started the match convinced in his own mind of his certain defeat. He had never before played—in fact never before seen—any of the leading stars of the tennis world. The best he had met were the leading men in the Middle West—Lott, Hennessey, and the others—but only in the spring or fall, never at the height of the season when these men were at their best. David was too sensible to overrate his successes against them at the

Western Championship a couple of years ago. He knew he was good in his district, a country district not far from Chicago, but he had no chance to judge how good, for he had had little competition. During his three weeks East, leading up to the National Championship, he had been so busy getting some idea of the mysteries of the grass courts, on which he had never played, that he took his defeats at Southampton and Newport at the hands of Hunter and Hennessey as a matter of course.

The first set of the final round found Cooper so convinced of his inferiority that the national champion ran it out comfortably at 6—3, a result that produced a slightly supercilious and patronizing smile from the champion which irritated David to the point where his inferiority complex melted in the heat of his wrath. The next set was a bitter battle, but the opening advantage gained by David in his sudden burst of speed induced by anger caught the national champion off guard and carried David to victory at 6—4. The champion was thoroughly aroused and rushed away with the next set at 6—2, but his effort was taking its toll. David faced defeat at 2—4 in

the fourth set, but a brilliant rally saved him to 4 all, and he won the set 9—7, aided by a lucky net cord that shook the title-holder.

Still the champion was quite confident, although nonplussed. Naturally the kid would crack in the fifth set. David, on the other hand, felt calm and determined for the first time in the match. He at last realized the champion was human after all and could be beaten. It was the first time the idea really entered his mind. He could win, he might win. No, by gracious! He *would* win!

The crowded stands seemed suddenly to sense the change in David's mental attitude. A deadly quiet spread like a gauze over the scene. A tenseness settled like a mist, almost tangible to the touch, over the people. Up near the top of the stand a little country girl turned to an eager small boy at her side and half whispered:

"Oh, Billy—can he win?"

A hasty "Sh'sh!" arose on all sides and the girl shrank abashed in her seat, but the boy's voice rose above the crowd, and in the stillness rang out clearly, "Sure he'll win!"

David, on the court, heard it and raised his

head. He knew that voice. Billy and Mary believed he'd win. Well, by gracious, he would!

Somewhere within him rose a power greater than anything he had ever known in his life. Carried away by its dominance he dashed into an attack so devastating that even the superb defence of the national champion crumpled before its ferocity. From 3 all to 6—3, set, match and championship was tennis so stupendous that as the last crashing drive ripped its way for a clever placement past the champion to end the match and crown a new champion, the crowd sat for a breathless moment silent, stunned, spellbound, and in that moment rang out again the boy's voice:

"Hey, Mary. Didn't I tell you he'd win!"

Then came that marvellous moment when the billow of applause burst around the new champion, and in an ocean of sound David Cooper, almost in a daze, found himself in the club house, champion of the United States.

CHAPTER II

DAVID COOPER'S rise to national champion had many of the elements of a Samuel Smiles hero or the qualities of a tabloid personality feature. He was the product of a small town in Illinois, situated some hundred miles from Chicago, that rejoiced in the name of Hobansville, which those few metropolitans who had ever heard of it termed derisively "Hobo's-ville." He was the eldest of two children born, as the sob-sisters of the daily press would say, "to poor but honest parents." He was ten years older than his brother Billy. At the age of eighteen he found himself left with his kid brother on his hands, due to an unfortunate but fatal accident to his parents, who failed to note the approach of an express train as the family Ford was crossing the railroad track. Thus it came about that his education stopped

just short of graduation from high school and his contemplated college career gave way to a serious and in most ways successful attempt to be father, mother, and brother in one to Billy, who was, even at the age of eight, showing definite signs of developing into a problem. David's father left little except five thousand dollars' worth of life insurance and their house, which was mortgaged to a point at which it could hardly be called an asset.

David was twenty-four when he won the national championship. The years from eighteen to twenty-four he had spent in hard work, first as a soda clerk at ten dollars a week and later as a garage mechanic where, over the latter period of four years, and to the infinite injury of many automobiles, of which machine he knew nothing when he started work, he attained a pretty complete practical education. All his spare time over the entire six years was spent either on the tennis court with Billy, or in the company of Mary Jones. David was tall, angular, yet powerfully but awkwardly built, his blond wavy hair always unruly and ruffled, his gray steely eyes inclined to be a shade suspicious of strangers, his uneven rugged

features pleasant but far from handsome. He was just an average, clean, middle-class American, in no way unusual except for his natural gift of athletic prowess. He was a born game player.

Even as a child David had stood out head and shoulders above his schoolmates in baseball, football and on the track. The year his parents died was his last year in high school and he was captain and star of all three sports in school. Billy even then gave promise of greater athletic ability than David. He had greater initiative and imagination as a child than his elder brother. Tennis was the real love of both David and Billy. There was one small tennis club with two dirt courts in Hobansville and at least fifty of the five thousand inhabitants of the town who played the game. The school had no courts and tennis was looked upon with scorn by the boys in school. It was a sissies' game. Derisive yells in mocking tones of "forty love," followed by ribald laughter, were the regular reactions of the youngsters of the town if a hardy citizen dared walk down the street to the club with the racquet openly displayed.

Yet David and Billy were indifferent to and uninfluenced by the general attitude of the boys in school. Their natural love of the game, gained from they knew not where, called them often to the club. The other boys were scandalized. Only David's outstanding prowess in the manly arts of football and baseball and on the track saved him from open accusation of being a baby, while several bloody noses of offending youngsters, administered by the pugilistic and hot-tempered Billy, quickly stopped such remarks addressed to him and established clearly his claim to being a he-man of eight.

Just how and why David became a great tennis player can never be accurately learned. He had that natural instinct for hitting the ball correctly that marked the games of Vincent Richards and Junior Coen in their early years. David was a student of any game he played. He liked to know how and why things were done. He was always willing to experiment. He bought books on tennis and studied them, usually during some school class, to the serious detriment of his scholastic record but to the definite advancement of his sport. The

death of his parents, which forced his abandonment of his schooling and sent him to work, at the same time caused him to give up much of his athletic activities. Naturally he dropped football, baseball, and track, for which he could make no opportunity, but kept up his tennis, which provided him with healthy exercise and pleasurable relaxation from his unaccustomed work. His tennis game improved steadily.

Then he met Mary Jones!

He met her at a church picnic. He had known who she was for weeks; in fact had dreamed dreams about her, induced doubtless by the smile and word of thanks he received when he placed a "Lovers' Delight" or "Banana Split" before her as part of his regular duties as a soda clerk. There was no particular reason which the average person could see to dream dreams about Mary Jones. She was well named Mary Jones. She was commonplace in looks, manner, and dress. She was of medium height, good but not remarkably beautiful figure, hair just hair color, features regular but lacking in vivacity, eyes a nice brown that lighted up prettily when she

smiled her shy self-conscious little smile; she looked typically Mary Jones. She was not the village belle, nor even one of the most popular girls in town, but to David Cooper she was perfect.

It was a fish that brought about the meeting. A church picnic is no picnic without sardines, and this particular Hobansville picnic was indeed a picnic. There were many boxes of sardines. The crowd of happy young people had almost completed the wreck of the large lunch hampers and were about to take up the serious business of the baseball game in which Dave was to pitch for one team, when his chum, Fred Barber, waving the remains of a large roll in one hand, yelled to him across the rustic table at which they were eating:

"Hey, Dave, chuck me one of them minnows."

Dave poised a sardine on the end of a fork and flicked it deftly at Fred. Unfortunately, just as he flicked the fork his arm was jostled and the flying fish, instead of landing in Fred's waiting hand, flashed off at a tangent and impinged soundly against the unsuspecting cheek of Miss Mary Jones. David, covered

with embarrassment, lightened in no way by the raucous laughter of his unsympathetic watchers, dashed to the side of the startled Mary and attempted incoherent apology.

She looked up at him with her brown eyes shining and smiled.

Words died on his lips, his breath failed, all his confusion was as nothing before the flood of sudden emotion that gripped him. She was marvellous, wonderful, perfect, adorable and—but that was as far as he reached in his thoughts, for she spoke.

"It's quite all right, Mr. Cooper. Please don't give it another thought. Isn't it time for the ball game?"

"Why—er—why, yes, yes, it is!" With a thud Dave came down to earth. He wished the old ball game could go hang or never be played if only he could stay there gazing into her brown eyes and listen to the music of her voice.

"Well, I wish you luck," Mary said demurely.

"Thank you," he gulped. "Thank you! Er—I er—that is—will you—I mean are you going down to watch the game?"

"Yes, indeed, I wouldn't miss it."

"Will you—er, that is, may I—I mean can I——" David was hopelessly twisted.

"Do you mind if I walk down with you?" asked Mary shyly.

"That's just what I asked *you*," said Dave defiantly.

"Why, yes, so you did," she laughed. "I certainly will."

And five years later he had just as much trouble to ask her another question but once more she said "Yes" to his incoherent words and each understood perfectly what the other meant.

CHAPTER III

Mr. Randolph Harker sat in the committee box beside his daughter and watched the downfall of the national champion with mingled feelings of regret and satisfaction. Mr. Harker was a member of the executive committee of the United States Lawn Tennis Association and a noted patron of tennis and other kindred amateur sports. He was also the head executive and largest stockholder in one of the biggest bond houses in New York. He was a financial and social power in the world. Incidently he was the employer of the national champion, who for the three years he had held the title held also a position and office, not over-occupied, and drew a salary generous in proportion to his effort from the bond house of which Mr. Harker was president. In fact it was Mr. Harker who had personally engaged

him just three years to the day previous when the national champion had dethroned Mr. Harker's own employee, who, strange as it may seem, was the then present title-holder. During the past three years the ex-champion had severed his connection with Mr. Harker's firm and was succeeded by the present national champion, who at the moment was going down to defeat at the hands of the unknown David Cooper from Hobansville, Illinois.

Mr. Harker watched the match critically. He had never himself played tennis, but like many officials of amateur sports his years of administration of the game had constituted him, in his own mind, a critic par excellence. He at least had seen tennis enough in the past fifteen years to recognize a great player when he saw one, and he certainly saw one in David Cooper.

The beautiful girl at his side watched her father keenly during the fluctuating tide of battle on the court. She herself knew far more tennis than her father. If her position as recognized leader of the young wealthy country club set of Westchester County had provided her more leisure moments, and her own indolence could have been overcome by am-

bition, she might have become national woman's champion. This was her father's dearest wish, but Arline Harker was seldom if ever seriously affected by anyone's dearest wish but her own. Ever since she was a baby she had ruled her home and family like a queen and she used the royal prerogative of doing no wrong by always doing exactly as she wished. She was twenty-two, beautiful in a rather subtly sensual way, full of a peculiar veiled physical allure, made potent by her indolent languorous movements and the slightly bored air of hauteur which cloaked even her wildest moments. She was short, but so slight and trim of figure that she gave the impression of being tall. Her face was a lovely oval, delicate features almost cameo-like in their chiselled perfection, made interesting by her eyes, which were a deep violet gray. There lurked in their depths a hint of sophistication, an invitation, almost a threat of evil, which the rest of her physical delicacy and charm belied. She was a hard-drinking, fast-stepping member of the modern generation who by some trick of natural quality gave the impression of the fastidiousness of the past.

Arline Harker was essentially a man's girl. She lived in a world of sport. She knew men and liked them. Her ability to handle them was a natural gift, inherited from her French mother, whom her father had met and married during a somewhat hectic visit to Deauville, when he was attempting to get used to the sudden wealth that success in Wall Street had brought to this shrewd middle-class American boy. It made little difference to Arline afterward to learn that her mother came of middle-class French stock. In her early days social position meant nothing to her, and the natural charm of her mother made up for family. Her father's wealth rapidly brought position to which neither he nor his wife was born, so that early in Arline's life her social position was established.

The match ended. A new champion was crowned. Mr. Harker turned to Arline.

"My dear, Cooper is a great player," he pronounced portentously.

"Yes, Father, so I saw," she laughed dryly.

"I think I'll just go in and meet the new champion and console the old," he said, rising.

She clutched his hand and said quickly:

"Are you going to engage him?"

"Well, I thought I'd just talk to him and get some idea of what his line is!"

"Father, sit down!"

Mr. Harker heard the command in her voice. He sat down again at her side.

"Well, my dear, what is it?"

"Now listen, Father. I don't know Mr. Cooper. He may be very nice. He certainly is a great player. He was at Southampton and Newport, and as you know, while I wasn't there myself I have seen a lot of the people who were. Emily Fitzgerald told me that Mr. Cooper hardly went out at all and when he did he was socially impossible. He didn't know how to dress or how to talk, and hardly how to eat correctly. After all, Father, while I know you have not been satisfied with Bob, who was beaten to-day, at least he is a gentleman."

"Yes, Bob is a gentleman and has been and still is a great tennis player, but he has no personality. People are not curious about him. He has brought us less business than any amateur champion I have ever employed, and I've had most of the famous ones in all

branches of sport in the last ten years. It's good business. This Cooper has a definite personality on the court. Far more than Bob. Didn't you notice it?"

"Yes, I did," Arline said thoughtfully, a queer, almost hungry, look in her eyes. "I felt a definite attraction about his very crudeness, the lack of style of his clothes, the way his hair was mussed up, and that may be attractive on the tennis court, but you wouldn't stand it in your office or your home."

"Well, I'm going to see him, anyway," and Harker rose.

She rose quickly and faced him.

"Promise me you will do nothing definite until I meet him. I'll be in the club-house porch in ten minutes."

"All right," he said, "I promise."

David Cooper emerged dripping from the shower and pushed his way through the admiring crowd to his locker. All about him eager hands were thrust forth to offer congratulations. Many and loud were the praises sung in his ears by people he had never known and never expected to know. Men who yesterday

passed him by with no better than a cool nod, if that, to-day hailed him as "Dave" with a warmth that bespoke intense admiration and friendship. He knew most of the demonstration was due to a combination of his victory and bootleg liquor drunk in celebration of it, but even so he glowed in the unaccustomed atmosphere of importance. Pressmen clamored for his attention, hung on his every word. The greatest thrill, however, was to look at his brother Billy, who sat in adoring silence on the bench and watched him with his soul in his eyes. This worship he knew to be sincere, real, and a tribute worthy of any achievement.

Bob Davis, now just another ex-champion, forgotten by the crowd immediately he met defeat, pushed his way through the throng followed by a tall, handsome man of fifty.

"Cooper, I want you to meet my boss, Mr. Harker. Mr. Harker is one of the members of the Executive Committee of the United States Lawn Tennis Association. He wanted to meet the national champion."

The national champion! Dave glowed inwardly as he realized that meant him! He could see Billy's face light up at the words.

"Delighted, Mr. Cooper." Mr. Harker's great voice boomed out genially as he pumped Dave's hand up and down vigorously. "A wonderful match. Sorry to see my friend Bob here, lose, but you are the greatest player in the world. You deserved to win."

Dave blushed furiously. "You are too kind, Mr. Harker, but it's wonderful to hear that from anyone as famous as you."

Mr. Harker laughed overwhelmingly. "Oh, I'm not the famous one. It's you now, Cooper."

Dave turned to Billy.

"Billy, I want you to know Mr. Harker. He is one of the greatest men in the United States."

Billy stepped forward and thrust forth a none too clean hand with the directness of Young America.

"Pleased to meet cha, sir," he said slightly incoherently.

"Proud of your brother, son?" asked the big man. "You have a right to be."

"I'll say I am," announced Billy. "He's the greatest player in the world just like you said. I told Mary all along he'd win, but she was a bit scared like a girl always is."

"Oh, was she! Who is Mary?"

"Aw gee, she's just Dave's girl from out home."

Harker turned to David.

"And she came on to see you win? Wonderful! Where is she?"

"She's waiting for me on the porch, isn't she, Billy?"

"Yeah, I guess so. I don't care."

"Well, I do," said David with great emphasis. "You see, sir," he turned from the boy to Mr. Harker, "Mary and I are engaged and now maybe we can get married soon."

"How delightful." Mr. Harker seemed generally interested. "Now I want you and Miss Mary and Billy to have tea with me and meet my daughter, Arline."

David looked up suddenly.

"Oh, is Miss Harker here! My, it would be wonderful to meet her. Where shall I find you when I'm dressed?"

"I'll meet you on the porch of the club house, and perhaps Billy will come with me to find Miss Mary even if I don't know her other name yet, and I can extend my invitation to her in person."

David smiled happily and started to pull on his shirt.

"Her name is Mary Jones," he said. "Go on, Billy, with Mr. Harker and introduce Mary and see you behave till I get there."

"All right, Dave, but hurry up. Come on, Mr. Harker"—and Billy was off for the door, Mr. Harker, his eyes glinting with amusement, following in his wake.

While David completed his toilet he allowed his thoughts to run along a favorite channel, namely Arline Harker. He had never met her but he had heard so much about her. Long before he came East he had followed her career in newspaper and magazine. His extreme interest in her pictures and the accounts of her exploits on sport field and in society gatherings was so great that Mary good-naturedly chided him about her rival and pretended to be jealous of the famous beauty. Now he was going to meet her, and he felt an almost regretful pang, for he knew that she could never be as charming as his idea of her.

A final tug at his tie, a final pat of the hairbrush at a lock of hair that was as usual slightly unruly, and he was ready. He arrived on the

crowded porch of the club house to be greeted by a burst of applause and cries of: "The champion!" He would have ducked and run if Mr. Harker, standing with a small group at a table down the veranda, had not hailed him in stentorian tones.

"Mr. Cooper! Mr. Cooper, here we are!"

He passed down the porch between tables, the focus of all eyes. It was a trying moment, yet pleasurable for all that. He arrived flushed but happy to suddenly find a pair of arms about his neck, Mary's kiss on his lips and Mary's voice in his ear.

"Oh, David, you won. I'm so proud of you."

He kissed her rather sheepishly and turned to find himself gazing at the flesh-and-blood reality of his dreams.

Arline Harker was graciously acknowledging the introduction which her father was making even more than usually ponderous.

"Now, Dad," she smiled, "don't embarrass Mr. Cooper. His achievement needs no words to increase our admiration. It is a real pleasure to know you, Mr. Cooper." Her usual hauteur melted under a stirring of her pulse which this

quite impossible young man from the Middle West seemed able to start in her by his mere presence. She had noticed it first when she watched him on the court and it annoyed her. Here at close range it was more pronounced, and, instead of annoying, it intrigued her.

"Come on," she cried gaily, "let's have tea. I'm sure you are starved after your match, and Miss Jones and Billy have already agreed with me that it is time to have something refreshing after the excitement. Now, Mr. Cooper, you sit here between Dad and me while I claim Miss Jones here beside me, for I want to hear all about the new champion and I'm sure I'll never get all the information I want from you. Billy can sit opposite and eat as much ice cream as he wants. I'm sure he wants some. I know I do."

Quickly and quietly she put them all at their ease. She found some mutual interest besides tennis and David to discuss with Mary, while with both Billy and David she talked sports like one of the boys. They all fell victims to her charm. Before the little tea party broke up, it was agreed that Mary, David, and Billy, the latter as a special treat

to celebrate Dave's victory, would dine with Mr. and Miss Harker and attend the theater that night before the new national champion and his able supporters started home on the midnight train.

CHAPTER IV

ARLINE HARKER studied herself closely in the mirror of her elaborate boudoir, then rubbed off her lip rouge and started toning down the color already applied to her cheeks.

"Too flashy for to-night. The eternal ingénue for me until Father lands this boob from the Middle West," she told herself sulkily. Arline was in a bad humor. The tea party following the championship match that afternoon had been a strain. She had wanted a drink badly instead of tea, but one look at Mary Jones and David and she knew that would be a false move. Obviously they looked upon her as the last word in social propriety, and she decided that open defiance of the Volstead Act in such a place would be too great a shock. She was also annoyed at herself for her violent reactions to both Mary and

David. Mary was an insult to her every instinct. The little fool knew nothing about dress, the little niceties of small talk, wasn't even pretty, and to top it all, was so sure of David she was not afraid even of her, Arline Harker. This was too much.

David caused her still greater irritation. Quite against her wishes, because after all even though he was national champion he was just a common hick from a small town in the Middle West, he stirred her as no man she had ever met. She could see his admiration in his eyes, but it was of a sort that did not correspond to her emotions at all. He looked upon her as something divine, remote, unattainable, goddess, not woman. It was all there in his deferential tone of voice, his manner, his eyes. He did not even seem to think of her as being of the same sex as Mary, whom he obviously loved in a manner very much of this world. Arline was too honest with herself and far too experienced in the world's way to attempt to deceive herself as to her own feelings toward David. His attraction for her was solely one of tremendous physical vitality and she hated herself because she could not rise above it,

and hated herself still more because she allowed herself to feel jealous of this little drab mouse of a girl from the Middle West for whom David obviously was destined.

She had just decided her make-up was sufficiently modest and conservative to suit her purpose that evening when her father knocked at her door.

"Oh, hello, Dad! Come in!"

Mr. Harker stretched himself comfortably on her chaise-longue and looked up at her with pride. He adored this beautiful girl of his. To-night he needed her help and was delighted to see that already she was preparing his aid.

"You look very sweet, dear," he said.

"Yes!" she said bitterly. "Sweet—modest—and I trust not so bored as I will be!"

"I don't see why you should be bored. I thought David Cooper a very interesting young man and his little girl very sweet."

"Yes! You would." A bitterness quite unusual in Arline crept into her tone. "You want him for your business, and as for the girl—well, they are both fools and you know it!"

"Now, Arline, that's not fair. Cooper has a

distinct personality and power. Surely you felt it this afternoon?"

"Oh, I know what you mean. I suppose you're right, but he's crude. He's not a gentleman."

Mr. Harker rose to his feet.

"My dear, I want him for my business. I leave his social education in your hands."

"Oh, very well, Dad!" Arline turned to her mirror and smoothed her hair. "I'll try my prettiest to persuade him to accept to-night, but as to his social education—well, I'll do my best—" a bitter smile put an exclamation point on her words and then she murmured almost to herself— "And how."

★ ★ ★

David Cooper and Billy were in the throes of a terrific struggle. They were dressing to dine with the Harkers. It was struggle enough for David to get into evening clothes, to which he was quite unaccustomed, without additional strain, but at the same time to be forced to oversee Billy's dressing, to be sure that dirt lurking in corners of ears and nails

was discovered and removed, also that stray chewing gum, marbles, string, and like treasures were excavated from pockets and that shoes were shined and teeth brushed was almost too much. Besides which the match had to be intimately discussed and Billy's private views expressed in full and with great vehemence. It all took time.

Finally, after much discussion and argument, David reached the point where he was fixing his dress tie and Billy was having a final battle with his pet cowlick on the top of his blond head.

"How do you like New York, Billy, now we are going back home?" asked Dave.

"Gosh, it's swell! I'll be glad to come back next year when you defend."

"But I won't come back next year, Billy."

"Aw gee, Dave, why not?"

"Can't afford it, kid. You know that."

"Aw sure we can. You gotta come." The boy's face was a study in disappointment.

"Well, it's a long way off yet, Billy. Let's wait and see. Come on, let's find Mary and get started. Gosh, we're late now," and Dave hustled Billy out of the room.

Mary was waiting for them in the lobby, her father by her side. She was dressed in her best party dress, a dainty white thing slightly out of style and obviously of the country, but in David's eyes perfection itself.

"Take good care of her, Dave, and be sure to be back here at eleven-thirty. The train leaves at twelve-fifteen." Mr. Jones glowed with pride as he looked at the eager young people.

"Sure I will, Dad. Come on, Mary. Hey, Billy, quit looking at those papers and come on, we're late."

"Dad!" exclaimed Mr. Jones in surprise. This was a new name for him from David.

"Well, you will be soon, now," said David, and he hustled the smiling girl and protesting boy out of the door.

Dinner at the Harkers' was a great success. Even Billy had a wonderful time, for Arline set out to please him by telling him about all the big tennis matches of the past five years. Mary listened as eagerly to Arline as did Billy, so that David was free to talk to Mr. Harker. The great financier was in his most affable mood and charmed the young Westerner by

his friendly air of equality so different from the cold reserve Dave had often met and disliked in the East.

"What are your future plans, Cooper?" finally asked Mr. Harker as the dessert was reached.

"Well, Mr. Harker," Dave said diffidently, "I hardly know. I'm thinking of going into business for myself."

"That's fine, young man, fine! What line?"

"Gas stations!"

"What?"

"Gas stations. You see, our house is on the main highway between Chicago and Indianapolis, and I thought that I could do very well with a big gasoline station there, especially now I've won the championship. I thought maybe I'd call it Champion Inn."

"Champion Inn!"

"Yes. You see, I always will be and then maybe curiosity will bring people to see me."

Mr. Randolph Harker frowned. This was an attempt by the champion to capitalize his tennis reputation, a most unethical thing. It was a step toward professionalism. Mr. Harker was a leading member of the Amateur Rule

Committee which sought strongly to prevent such attempts. He would rebuke this young man at once.

He cleared his throat and started to arrange his strongest arguments against such a course. Suddenly he remembered he wished to engage this young man for his own business. Ah, yes, what a splendid way out of a difficult situation! If only he could engage Cooper he would not only get his own desire but he would be preventing a lamentable prostitution of the amateur spirit of tennis. Now he certainly would engage Cooper no matter how difficult it might prove. He almost puffed out his cheeks with self-righteousness.

David had not seen this reaction to his words and was continuing eagerly:

"Then I thought, too, I could sell some small cars. Fords, maybe, and Chevrolets. You know, Mr. Harker, there's not much chance to do anything with Rolls-Royces in a town like Hobansville, but they do use Fords!"

Mr. Harker smiled at his enthusiasm. David rushed on:

"Naturally all my town will be pleased at my winning the championship and I will be

able to reach all our richest men, the only ones who would be good prospects to buy cars. I ought to do very well. I think I can afford to get married now." He gazed proudly down the table at Mary who was deep in conversation with Arline and Billy about the great match that day.

"That's splendid, Cooper, splendid. How much do you think you can clear your first year?" Mr. Harker strove earnestly and with success to keep a note of shocked surprise at the commercial attitude of the new champion out of his voice.

"Well," David spoke slowly, "I believe I should clear almost five thousand dollars. I always said I'd never marry until I was making three and this year I made just over two, but gosh, Mr. Harker, I'm sure with this lucky break of my winning this title I'm safe to figure on three thousand anyway and get married. Mary and I aren't keen on this waiting and so I guess we'll be married just as soon as we get back home."

"And your tennis?" Mr. Harker let a note of regret creep into his deep voice.

"Well, that's all over, I guess," David an-

nounced. "I'm afraid I can't even come on to defend. It will take too much time and money from my new business." His pride in his vision was in his voice.

"Won't you miss it terribly?" Mr. Harker asked quietly.

"Sure I will," said Dave, "but at least I can play with Billy at home. The kid's great."

Mr. Harker cleared his throat.

"Mr. Cooper, there is a position waiting for you in my office at ten thousand dollars a year —and you won't have to give up tennis if you are with us!"

David gasped and hastily gulped a swallow of water. Ten thousand dollars a year! It was twice what his wildest dreams of success had allowed him to hope for during the coming year. It was a fortune. It meant everything to him and Billy. It meant, above all else, Mary!

"Why, Mr. Harker! Why, you don't mean that, surely!"

"Yes, I do. The position is waiting for you at once."

"But—but what am I supposed to do!"

"Sell bonds."

"Sell bonds? But, Mr. Harker, I don't know anything about bonds!"

Mr. Harker smiled genially.

"That is all right. You don't need to. We have expert salesmen who can follow up contacts which you can make for us. You need not worry about that. What do you say?"

"It's wonderful, wonderful! I don't know what to say, I don't know how to thank you. It would mean living here in New York, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, of course."

"Well, I'd like to have a little time to think it over. I'd like to talk to Mary about it. You see, it's very much her affair, too!"

"All right, my boy, take your time. Tell me to-night, if you can, or if not wire me within the next two days. Well, it's almost curtain time and I know Master Billy wants to see all the play. How about that, Billy! Want to start for the theater?"

"Sure do!" Billy's enthusiastic reply was slightly muffled owing to the ice cream and cake which he had just placed in his mouth, but the result was the same, for Arline, catch-

ing her father's eye, rose and pulled Billy to his feet.

"All right," she said. "Let's go."

In the moment during which Mary, Billy, and David were finding their coats Arline asked her father if he had succeeded with David.

"Almost," he replied. "All it needs is a word or two from you."

"I'll do my best," she whispered, and calling to Billy and David to hurry, she tucked her arm through Mary's and led the way to the waiting limousine.

What an evening it was for the three from Hobansville! Arline, with keen insight, had picked one of the romantic tuneful operettas with comedy enough to keep Billy happy, and romance and beauty enough to completely capture Mary and David.

The show ended with the guests in a daze. Billy, wide-eyed at the final passionate duet between the happy lovers on the stage, not dreaming that the two had not been on speaking terms for the past month, arose and announced in tones that swept the auditorium:

"Hot puppy, what a clinch! Gee, that was swell!"

Mary and David, hand in hand, hardly realized the curtain had fallen until the blaze of lights in the house roused them from their mutual dream of romance. They walked out to the car in a state of mind that led them to believe that New York was heaven, Mr. Harker at least St. Peter if no more, and Arline one of the leading angels.

They had piled in the car and started for the Vanderbilt to drop the travellers when Arline turned suddenly to Mary:

"It's going to be so nice seeing you often this winter."

"Why," said the surprised Mary, "what do you mean? Are you coming to Hobansville?"

"Why, no! Didn't Mr. Cooper tell you? He is taking a position with Father here in New York."

"Hot dog!" Billy almost went off the seat he was sitting on. "Atta boy, Dave!"

"David!" Mary looked reproachfully at him. "You did not tell me!"

David flushed. "Well, it isn't really settled, Mary. Mr. Harker has offered me a wonderful position, but I don't know yet what I will do."

"Aw gee, Dave, don't be a dumb-bell!"

There was no doubt about what Billy thought of the new position. As far as he was concerned it was settled now.

Arline cut in again.

"You know, Miss Jones, I will so enjoy having you and Mr. Cooper here. He tells me you are to be married very soon and I'm sure New York is quite the place to spend a honeymoon. Father and I will be delighted to see you both as often as you can spare us time."

Mary smiled shyly. "Yes, I'm sure we'd love it on here. It's a wonderful chance for David. I'd love to see him take him. It's wonderful of you, Mr. Harker, to want him."

"Mary," David's voice was intense, "do you really want me to come East—and bring you with me?"

"Yes, dear," she said. "More than anything else in the world. It's your big chance. You must take it."

"Mr. Harker," David's voice rose excitedly, "I'll take that position. The future Mrs. Cooper says so and that settles it."

Just at that minute the car stopped at the Vanderbilt Hotel, amid confused thanks and good-byes out of which Billy's cry of "Atta

kid, Dave, that's the old fight," blended with Mr. Harker's impressive announcement, "You have made a wise choice in this little lady, my lad! She will steer you a sound course in life," to the serious injury to both heartfelt expressions.

Mary, David, and Billy disappeared through the revolving door into the hotel. Mr. Harker settled back in the luxurious upholstery of the great car.

"My dear!" he pronounced to Arline, "I have saved tennis from commercialization and given a young man a start in life. I'm proud of to-night's work."

Arline stretched her legs well in front of her, lighted a cigarette from the box at her side in the car, and blew a ring of smoke lazily over her head.

"And how!" she murmured.

CHAPTER V

David and Mary were married two weeks after their return to Hobansville. The wedding was rather lost sight of in the sensation caused by David's winning of the American championship and the even greater sensation of a Hobansvillian going to work in New York. In many ways the town was far more stirred by David's leaving for the East than by his championship. The town had accepted his coming marriage to Mary as a matter of course and with a slightly bored pity for her as one who was throwing herself away on a young man who would never amount to much, a viewpoint that was rudely shaken by his victory in the championship and now completely shattered by his winning a coveted position at a fabulous salary in one of the great financial houses in New York. From his previous place as

just one of the general run of Hobansvillians David emerged over-night as its leading citizen and a power in the town.

David and Mary had little to say about his good fortune, being far too wrapped up in their coming wedding and departure for New York to waste breath and time in words, but Billy was in nowise so hampered. He told all who would listen, and these included practically the whole town, all about it. His views were slightly colored by personal prejudice.

"Sure," he would say, "Dave's going to New York. Old man Harker—I mean Mr. Randolph Harker, the millionaire, you know who he is—is making Dave a partner. Yeah! And we're goin' to live in New York on Fifth Avenue right by the Harkers! Sure! And Dave's got a swell office, all to himself, and in between times he's going to play tennis all over the world and I'm going with him! Huh? Mary? Yeah, she's going, too. Gee, she's swell. Huh? Yeah, I guess we'll be back here often, when Dave gets time, but he'll be pretty busy with tennis, and running Mr. Harker's business for him and everything."

Naturally, since Billy was the only source

of information about David's position in the East, this sort of talk led the town to look upon David as a person of such extreme importance that Wall Street would fail if he did not arrive at once. True, some of the older members of the community, whose sole experience in city life was an annual one-day visit to Chicago, or maybe less, felt that "that boy" was making "a big mistake, going to New York." He had "a great chance right here at home to some day maybe even be mayor." However, town pride in the achievement of one of its own boys outweighed petty jealousy and ignorance, so that the two weeks between David's return and his wedding were filled with celebration and congratulation, heartfelt and sincere.

David was filled with confidence. He faced the future secure in his certainty of success. It was true he knew nothing about his new job, but he could learn. He always had been able to learn anything he really set his mind to master. Then, too, Mr. Harker said knowledge of bonds was not really necessary, since he would have other men to handle the details.

It was his salary that thrilled David. Ten

thousand dollars a year! Why, only such men as Mr. Si Perkins, president of the Hobansville People's Bank, or Mr. Joshua Jenkins, who owned the one department store of the town, made any such money as that in Hobansville. It meant he could give Mary pretty clothes like Arline's, maybe made at the same place. (How was he to know that his whole year's income could not clothe Arline Harker for one short season?) He could give Mary a car and servants, and take her to the theater any time she wanted to go—at least Mr. Perkins and Mr. Jenkins could do all these things for their families in Hobansville. It ought to be easier in New York. Then there was Billy. How excited the kid was about going to New York! He would love it. David thrilled at the thought of the boy's pleasure. Now at last he could give Billy the sweaters, sports uniforms, baseball gloves, football togs, and new tennis racquets about which the kid always dreamed, but up to now could never have.

He would send Billy to a fine boarding school where the boy would have a good education and the chance to meet nice boys of his own age. It was tough on the kid to give up his pals

at home, but he would do all he could to make it up to him. Billy was a little fresh but he was a good kid. Not a bit evil-minded as kids go to-day. David was aware of the fact that Billy knew more than his prayers, but Billy was not a foul-mouthed, smutty-minded kid like many David knew. The kid was crazy about sports and far too interested in them to waste time on many of the popular indoor amusements of the present younger generation. David intended to try to keep him that way. Billy was a wonderful tennis player, better a whole lot than he had been at the same age, David told himself judiciously. He'd be national champion some day. David made up his mind to do all in his power to help the kid to become just that, and then maybe his future would be as clear and fine as David's was right at the present moment.

Billy himself was far too excited about going to New York to give very much thought to the future. He rather disliked to leave the gang in Hobansville, particularly Dick Hartwick, his particular chum in school, and Alice Brown, the girl next door. Billy would never have admitted even to David he would miss

Alice, but for the past six months he had discovered that Alice was quite a girl. Up to that time she had been a blot on his existence, always calling him over to see her, or making a fuss over him in school until the gang kidded him about her. She had been just a pest, until one day six months ago, on a particularly warm, clear evening in May under a lovely full moon when the gang had been playing hide-and-seek around their block. He and Alice had chosen the same clump of bushes to hide behind. He was annoyed when he found her there, but he was a little surprised to find she looked awfully pretty under the moon, in the little sweater and skirt she was wearing.

They were hiding in the yard of Mr. Hascomb, who owned Snoofy. Snoofy was a big bulldog that was the bane of the neighborhood owing to its bad temper. Billy discovered Alice just as Snoofy discovered both. The dog arrived at top speed with a ferocious bark that sent Alice flying to Billy, both arms around his neck. Somewhat handicapped by the girl, Billy reached down and seized a stick he found at his feet, while with determined mien he yelled at the dog, "Go away, you ole fool."

At the same moment he swung the stick. By rare good fortune the end caught Snoofy on the nose, causing him such surprise and pain that he retreated in haste to his kennel, a wiser but no friendlier animal. Billy, thrilled by victory, waved the stick aloft, Alice still clinging around his neck.

"Durn old fool," Billy announced again, probably meaning the dog.

Alice shyly looked at him and backed away. "You were wonderful," she said.

"Yeah," agreed Billy and before he knew what else he was saying he heard himself announcing: "So are you!"

At which moment the raucous voice of the boy who was "It" broke into the idyllic moment: "I spy Alice and Billy hugging behind that bush." They descended to reality in a rush for base. . . . However, Billy had not yet quite recovered from the conviction that Alice was wonderful. He hated to go to New York and leave her behind.

It was the night before Billy was to leave for New York. David and Mary had been married more than a week before and had departed to Niagara Falls on their honeymoon.

They were just the pair who would go to Niagara Falls for their honeymoon. It had been arranged for Billy to meet them later in New York when David was to report to Mr. Harker for his new position. Billy had said good-bye to everyone in turn but Alice. For a week or more he had been living at Mary's home with her family, for his own home was closed. He had put off seeing Alice because he knew he didn't want to say good-bye to her and he always put off things he didn't want to do. Sometimes he put them off so long he never did them. However, this was one he knew he had to do. Resolutely he set out to see Alice. She was at home and they spent a most uncomfortable half-hour under the eyes of father and mother. Finally Billy heroically mustered up his courage to ask Alice if she would have an ice cream soda, an offer as quickly accepted and acted upon. The two disappeared out the door almost before her father and mother saw them move. The soda was not a great success. Neither wanted it, nor could they talk because neither could say what they really felt. They were too young to be anything but natural; the idle chatter used by adults to hide their

feelings was to them still an unlearned lesson. Finally they walked back to the gate of her house. They stood in awkward silence for a long minute.

Suddenly Billy thrust out a hand.

"Well," he said huskily, "so long."

She took his hand in both hers.

"Good-bye, Billy," she said, also huskily.

He dropped her hand and turned away.

Suddenly he stopped.

"Hey!" he said abruptly. She hadn't moved from the gate.

"Say! Gee! Alice, will you—er, that is, I mean will you—write—to me?"

"Yes, Billy—if you write me."

"Gee, that's swell." Billy kicked the gate with his toe. "Well, so long."

"Good-bye."

He kicked the gate again.

"Well, so long." He turned and walked down the street, his eyes blinking rapidly. Of course, it was dust or something, he told himself.

That was Billy's good-bye to Alice, and though in after years he had many a difficult one to say, none proved harder nor more

sincere, for never again was Billy Cooper quite the same boy. It was his last night as a small-town youngster. From that night New York placed its mark on him, a mark that can never be eradicated.

CHAPTER VI

MARY and David were living at the Vanderbilt Hotel. It was a month since they had arrived in New York, a month full of excitement and new experiences. Billy's prophecy that they were to live in Fifth Avenue right beside the Harkers had proved a slight exaggeration, but at least he was only two streets off. They were on Park Avenue. David had found no serious difficulty in falling into harness with the Harker organization. Mr. Harker himself had taken him down with him the first day, introduced him to all the staff, and turned him over to Mr. Carey, his immediate boss, with instructions to take his time getting acquainted with his work. Mr. Carey was ordered to give Mr. Cooper all possible assistance. David was surprised and delighted to find that he was working on a commission on all business he

brought in over a certain amount, in addition to his wonderful salary. He felt convinced that shortly he would be in a position to rival Henry Ford, J. P. Morgan, John Rockefeller or even Mr. Randolph Harker himself. Mr. Harker arranged a drawing account for him at his own bank, as an advance against salary and commissions, with the sly comment that "he knew a new wife would be a bit expensive in New York shops."

The first month in New York passed in a whirl of gayety. There was little or no time to look into finding a suitable apartment for the newly-weds, but Arline Harker promised Mary to go apartment-hunting with her just as soon as there was time. Mr. Harker was delighted at the sensation caused by David's arrival in New York. The press outdid themselves with columns of free advertising, in all of which Mr. Harker and his famous banking house figured prominently. It was years since New York could boast of a national tennis champion, so the permanent residence of this new champion of the nets in New York City was hailed far and wide. The story-book aspect of David's career from small-town boy of no reputation

to a world-famous figure made good copy and held a popular appeal. David himself, under the watchful eye of Mr. Harker and Arline, who steered his protegé through the dangerous course of best tailors, proper restaurants, correct night clubs, etc., all of which he learned with that ready adaptability that was his greatest gift, emerged quickly into very much of a New York clubman. True the natural Western directness and the indescribable something that a small town always imprints on its citizens and which cannot be wholly overcome were definitely still his, but they added a quaint difference to his personality, a charm, which made him stand out in any gathering. Arline made a serious effort to steer the same wise course for Mary, but the small town was too deeply ingrained in Mary for her to grasp New York life and customs as quickly as did David. He seemed born to his new position. She was obviously not of the city. Still, it was a wonderful education for them to be in such close touch with the Harkers and to both, especially David, Mr. Harker's and Arline's words were law on any subject.

Billy was at school. It was Mr. Harker who

had placed him. He was at St. Bernard's, up in New England, one of those exclusive institutions for the children of the rich, an institution ingrained in the spirit of Boston where "Cabots speak only to Lodges and Lodges speak only to God." St. Bernard's had a deep-rooted conviction it was ordained for the education only of Lodges, and strove not only to impart necessary learning but a deep conviction into the mind of each boy that metaphorically speaking he was a Lodge. It usually required at least three years on the waiting list and the necessary speaking acquaintance with the Deity to get a boy in St. Bernard's, but in Billy's case Mr. Harker supplied the vocal relation to the Almighty from a social angle and overcame the three years on the waiting list by a personal call on the headmaster, who was an old personal friend and who stood in great obligation to Mr. Harker, since Mr. Harker had tided the school over a critical financial crisis some five years before. So it came to pass that Billy Cooper, hard-boiled egg of Hobansville, Illinois, entered St. Bernard's, there to learn much of which he had never dreamed and which could not be found

in his school books, and there also to become convinced that he was at least a Cabot if not a Lodge. Thank God, it was only a passing condition with him.

Billy's absence in school gave Mary and David far greater freedom than when he was with them, for David had no intention of letting Billy go everywhere with them and become just a spoiled kid. The result was that during the week before Billy left, David and Mary missed several parties which they would have enjoyed. However, David saw no harm in the theater for Billy, and the first week in New York was largely one of business and the theater. Arline Harker had proved a great aid in fitting Billy up for school. She took Mary to Rogers Peet's, Abercrombie & Fitch's, and Spalding's, introduced her to the particular salesman who was honored by the Harker patronage, and all in all she made shopping a privilege.

Arline was pained and a little ashamed of Mary's instinctive economy and desire for cheap things. She overcame this condition only by a continuous reminder that David insisted that Billy have the best of everything for

school. Arline picked out most of the boy's clothes, and somewhat to Mary's annoyance but Billy's great enjoyment her taste ran to an ultra-modern style that was decidedly jazzy. Billy was thrilled. He set off for school in a swell sport suit of light brown, a polo coat of tan, wonderful red and brown golf stockings, and a soft tan felt hat that almost verged on the "whoopie" variety. All in all he was quite the sheik, but he looked so handsome that Mary forgave the extravagance while David was lost in admiration of Arline's selections. Billy's success in ultra-modern dress led David to lean toward the same style, and each new item to his own wardrobe brought him closer to the jazz age. Mary was secretly shocked at this sign of extravagance and possible wildness in David, yet, much as she hated to admit it, very proud of the dashing style her handsome husband affected.

Arline introduced the Coopers to most of her favorite amusements and all of her friends. She was more and more attracted by David. His adaptability in acquiring style in dressing, his glowing vitality and youthful enthusiasm in all sorts of parties overcame any fears on her part

concerning his social suitability. Mary was a source of never-ending pain to her. The little fool never would learn anything. Throughout the gamut of social activity ranging from the Metropolitan Opera to Texas Guinan's, through the Westchester-Biltmore and the Embassy Club, from formal receptions at Mrs. Astor's to informal brawls in Greenwich Village and Harlem, Mary had shown no signs of learning to drink, smoke, pet, flirt, or even tell dirty stories. In Arline's eyes she was a total loss. David, on the other hand, while starting out as a distinctly handsome prig, was rapidly learning. She had at least humanized him to where he smoked regularly, took an occasional cocktail, and once even returned from Greenwich Village slightly exhilarated if not actually drunk. It was upon this occasion that he had shocked Mary inexpressibly and delighted the rest of the gathering by loudly singing the unexpurgated version of "Johnnie and Frankie" all the way up Fifth Avenue. That slight vocal outburst was the cause of the first serious squabble in the Cooper family, and its immediate result was that David went on

the water wagon, a position which he held with great dignity for three weeks.

It was during these three weeks that Mary decided that she must get into a home of her own. The Vanderbilt was too well situated in the center of the town for David. She made up her mind she was not going to have her husband running out nights without her, yet she knew she could not keep up the present pace. It was out of her class. She found it was too difficult to turn down invitations from the Harkers when they were just a few blocks away. Mr. Harker showed so plainly that he wanted David to go out socially as much as possible. A frantic week of apartment-hunting finally located one that Mary decided would do. It was a furnished apartment of three bedrooms, sitting and dining room, two baths and kitchenette, far up Park Avenue near the Hundreds, at a rent that Mary thought was staggering, but David said "yes" to it at once when he heard Mary liked the situation and layout. The immediate result of this move was to provide the Coopers their first real chance to become acquainted since their

wedding trip. From then to now they had practically not seen each other alone except to sleep.

Each was just a little shocked to find great changes in the other. In David's eyes Mary was still the sweetest thing in the world, but with the education of the past weeks in New York, he saw her no longer as the most beautiful. Somehow or other she seemed colorless, drab, almost faded. He missed the magnetic vitality of Arline Harker and her friends. He felt let down, depressed, burdened in her presence, yet could not find the reason. He decided it was all his fault, anyway, and he was just tired from his unaccustomed life.

Mary was startled at the restlessness so new to David that marked his whole personality. Never had he seemed so handsome, so vital, so utterly adorable to her, yet she seemed unable to quite meet him on an equal footing. The perfect understanding that had made their destiny together seem so sure and certain back in Hobansville was gone here in New York, and while she loved him just as desperately, maybe more so, and she knew he loved her, yet a tiny gap had opened in their mutual

existence intangible yet indisputable. She thought their home life in the apartment together would quickly bridge that gap, but she never fully knew how wise she had been to insist on their own home.

The winter passed quickly and happily. Both Mary and David lost that sense of strain. It had apparently vanished in their mutual interest in the apartment and its attendant cares. Billy had been home at Christmas for his three weeks' vacation, looking marvellously well and happy and but little changed. True, his vocabulary had altered some. His "Hot puppies!" had changed to occasional "Hells" and "Damns" that slipped out unexpectedly. Also he showed an increased interest in girls and a greater knowledge of double meanings, but, as David told himself, after all, Billy was nearly fifteen and his transition was only natural. David played a little tennis with the boy at the Brooklyn Heights Casino, to which organization he belonged through the influence of Mr. Harker. David had played just enough tennis during the past weeks to keep his eye on the ball, while Billy had practised all the autumn in the indoor court at

school, and David was delighted to find a marked improvement in the boy's game, an improvement so great that it required all David's best efforts to keep Billy from taking a set from him, something quite unheard-of in the past. Billy was keen for St. Bernard's and said the fellows were a "gang of swell guys but a little high-hat." He went back to school eager for the coming spring and the tennis season.

David and Mary had not seen as much of the Harkers during the past few weeks, but as the end of January came around they received an invitation to dine *en famille* with the Harker family, or, as Mr. Harker put it, "to lay plans for our coming tennis triumph."

CHAPTER VII

DINNER at the Harkers' proved to be a very informal affair that night. Arline had just returned from a hectic week-end at Atlantic City and was tired. Mr. Harker had been deeply engrossed in a big business deal that had demanded much of his time and energy for the past two weeks, and he sent word by David to Mary not to dress formally but to come along for a quiet snack in comfort. Somehow the old thrill of the Harkers' wonderful home was missing for Mary. She was aware of a distinct preference for her own tiny dining room. Talk centered around tennis, and Mary was definitely bored. Before her marriage to David she had followed tennis with an awed interest because of him, but she really knew nothing about it. Now, after more than three months of living in a tennis atmosphere filled

with earnest and extremely lengthy discussions about such things as nets, outs, lobs, volleys, strategy, match temperament as shown by such unknown and to her uninteresting individuals as Cochet, Lacoste, Borotra, Tilden, Larned, Johnston, Brookes, etc., etc., forever more, she had reached a point where she was ready to scream at the word "tennis." She was just as proud of David's tennis as ever and just as eager for his success, and if all the tennis talk had been about him she would have been the leading orator, but she did wish that all other players and general discussions about the game were forgotten. To-night Arline and her father were full of conversation about the great players of Europe whom David had never seen and, as far as Mary was concerned, neither of them ever would. Mary sat silent and rather unhappy as the other three discoursed on Cochet's half-volley, Lacoste's backhand and Borotra's smash until Mr. Harker, in the middle of a splendid peroration on French genius, suddenly caught her expression.

"I'm afraid, Mrs. Cooper, you are not interested in French tennis because as yet you

haven't seen these great stars. This year will fix all that. Now, David, I want to lay out with you and your charming wife your tennis plans for the coming summer."

"Oh, but Mr. Harker," said Mary quickly, "we don't need plans in January for a few little games of tennis to be played in July, do we?"

"Well, my dear, it's better to be prepared and have one's plans laid well in advance. That's how we run our business! Isn't it, Cooper?" Mr. Harker smiled patronizingly at David.

"Yes indeed, sir. Your policy is very far-sighted," David agreed heartily.

"Now I'll tell you what we will settle on. Next week, David, you and Mrs. Cooper arrange to go south to Florida. You should play two tournaments at Miami and one at Palm Beach, then come back to New York for the National Indoor Championship. After that I suggest you sail at once to the Riviera for the end of the season, play the French Championship in Paris, go directly from there to England for grass court play, climax your trip at Wimbledon. Then you can join the Davis Cup

squad for the challenge round in Paris. I have already discussed this plan with our Davis Cup chairman, and he agrees the team can win the American Zone without you and it is better for you to be conditioned and at your best in Europe."

"But, Mr. Harker——" began David.

Mary cut in, almost indignantly.

"Why, Mr. Harker, David can't take that much time off. Think of his business! You shouldn't expect him to!"

"Now, Mary——" began David again, but Mr. Harker's smooth tone cut across his speech.

"My dear," Mr. Harker was smiling genially at the flushed girl, "as your husband's employer, don't you think you can leave that to me?"

"But, Mr. Harker——" Mary spoke diffidently but bravely when David stepped into the breach.

"Mary, dear," he said, "I'm sure we can follow Mr. Harker's judgment without worrying our heads."

Arline, who up to now had sat an interested but silent spectator, spoke up.

"That's a good deal of tennis, Dad, for one

season, but if David can stand it, it's a great plan."

"Oh, I can stand it, Arline; I thrive on tennis."

Mary glanced sharply at her husband. David! Arline! It was the first time she had noticed the use of first names between them. Arline and Mr. Harker never called her Mary, and certainly the former had never hinted that Mary should call her Arline.

Arline noted the glance and inwardly smiled. She would yet show this little country mouse where she got off.

"Well, then, Dad, I'll tell you. Let's take the yacht, just you and me, David and Mrs. Cooper"—a silky subtle jeer was hidden in the soft tones of her voice at the last name—"and sail down to Miami and Palm Beach; there's plenty of time for it and I would enjoy the rest."

Mr. Harker sat back thoughtfully in his chair. "I have no immediate business that demands my personal supervision for a few weeks. I believe I would enjoy that, Arline. What do you say, David? We can live right on the yacht all the time."

"That's wonderful, Mr. Harker. Arline, you think up the greatest things to do. Mary and I would be delighted. Wouldn't we, Mary?" He turned eagerly to her.

Mary smiled wanly at him. She had never been on a boat and hated the thought of the sea. She knew she'd be very seasick. Still more she hated the thought of three long weeks with the Harkers. She dreaded the feeling of incompetence that she always felt in Arline's presence. She dreaded the subtle slurs she always sensed in Arline's manner. She dreaded the boredom she knew would be hers during the hours and hours when tennis held sway on and off the court.

Most of all, she dreaded the continuous comparison with Arline Harker under the eyes of David. She was too inherently honest not to recognize and admit the charm and beauty of Arline. She knew this trip was no place for her or David.

"Yes, David," she said gaily. "It will be—" a light laugh broke her words—"wonderful."

CHAPTER VIII

MARY never forgot that sea trip to Miami. It was far worse than even her wildest fears could have painted. *The Love Set* as Arline had named the magnificent yacht, which her father had bought her on her twenty-first birthday with every intention of naming after her, was the finest type of ocean-going vessel of her class, but even *The Love Set* had difficulties with some of the storms that lash the Atlantic coast, and on this trip she nosed out of New York Harbor into the worst of the entire winter. Only such intrepid sailors as Mr. Harker and Arline, fortified by their knowledge of the marvellous ability of their crew and the seaworthiness of their vessel, would have attempted to leave. Mary succumbed before the harbor mouth was reached, collapsing into her luxurious berth with first the hope she

wouldn't die, and then the prayer she would and that quickly so as to end her sufferings. Her only consolation was that after two hours of loneliness, imagining the impossible in all things, she was joined by David, who collapsed in a like condition in the berth by her side, and there both stayed until the final morning of the trip, when, bolstered by the second successive day of calm waters and bright warm sunlight, they emerged, green and wan, to face their hosts.

The confused incoherent memories of pitching cabins, aching heads, and retching stomachs, which left a mental state slightly reminiscent of a bad nightmare, faded quickly before the fairyland beauties of Miami.

Mary and David stood spellbound at their first vision of the famous resort. To their seasick-haunted gaze it looked like heaven with its beautiful palms waving in the warm gentle breeze, the flowers shining in the yellow beauty of the sun, the quaint flattish buildings with here and there quite a skyscraper rising to add picturesqueness to its steadily growing skyline. The officer standing at the rail of the yacht waiting to assist them into the speed-

boat that was to take them around to the Flamingo, where the tennis courts were situated, appeared to them almost like St. Peter at the Gate, even if he seemed rather young and handsome for so venerable a saint. Arline Harker, beautiful in her trim sports costume and quite herself, having in no way suffered from the storm, came up the companionway singing lightly, "I'll Kiss Your Hand, Madame." She broke off in the middle of a bar to greet the Coopers.

"Hello, invalids," she cried. "You are a great pair to add joy to a yachting trip! Hope you feel better. You look a shade seedy, Mrs. Cooper."

"I hope I don't look as I feel," Mary said wistfully. "No one should ever do that, least of all here. Oh, what a glorious place."

"Yes, it is lovely, isn't it?" Mr. Harker arrived in time to hear Mary's remark, and his voice startled her. "Come on, children," he continued genially. "Off to the Flamingo and the opening of our great tennis argosy. David needs some practice and you, my dear," putting his arm through Mary's and leading her to the waiting speedboat, "need some food, rest, and sun."

Even the short run around to Miami Beach where the Flamingo rose majestically above its fellow hotels won both Mary and David over to the joys of speedboats, while both were lost in admiration of the skill with which Arline took the wheel and steered them to their destination. The exhilaration of the thrilling rush so close to the water's surface brought the color back to Mary's cheeks and humor to her outlook on life. Maybe Miami wasn't going to be so bad after all.

The two weeks at Miami found many a moment when Mary wished herself back in New York. Arline Harker knew everyone and as usual ran everything. David was the lion of the hour, and from early morning to late at night the demands for his presence at this, that, and the other thing were continuous. To make matters worse for Mary, David obviously loved it. He went from *thé dansant* to cocktail party, from there to dinner and any other entertainment that followed, with all the unbridled enthusiasm of a puppy out for exercise.

Mary found herself more and more sure she disliked society life. David ate, drank, and

smoked with an air of one to the manner born, but poor Mary disliked the taste and effect of liquor, objected seriously to caviar, lobsters, cold and intricate salads of all sorts, oysters, and practically all the desserts that seemed to be the only regular fare in society. She longed for a little plain boiled steak and a few home-made hot rolls followed by a quiet evening, possibly a game of Rummy, the only card game at which she had any marked success or, in fact, knew anything about, and then early to bed. Instead of this she was doomed to sit around and watch innumerable women make fools of themselves over her husband, and, after they grew slightly tight, paw him with great earnestness. Then, to make matters worse, she had to see David not only stand for it but apparently enjoy it. She listened to so much talk about tennis and tennis players that she felt like a net. Because she was David's wife she was regarded as an expert, the last word on tennis, and her attempts to meet the ridiculous questions asked her, and yet to avoid rudely insulting the questioner, were almost more than even her placid nature could stand. However, all these

irritations might have been overcome or overlooked if it hadn't been for Arline Harker. Her attitude was the culminating factor that drove poor Mary to a point where she seriously considered going back home to New York by train and taking David with her, regardless of consequences. Only her fear for his business future if she aggravated Mr. Harker kept her from taking some such step. Arline was playing mixed doubles with David at both Miami and Palm Beach and apparently she didn't know the partnership ended, at least in Mary's eyes, on the court. Far from it with Arline. She insisted on David going everywhere with her. True, she always supplied another escort for Mrs. Cooper, unless Mr. Harker were going, but she showed clearly that she regretted the necessity of having them along. Her claim was always that it was "good business for David to know these people." It would "mean a lot to him in future years." And David fell in with her view. In justice to David, it must be said he had no idea of Mary's feelings in this matter, and she never let him know them. He was terribly flattered by Arline's interest, but it never entered his

mind that there was any personal interest in him from her point of view. To him she was still an unattainable queen, bending graciously down to bestow favors on him, her unworthy subject. He never regarded her in any other light, and would have been inexpressibly pained and surprised at Mary's point of view.

He did as Arline wished because it never occurred to him not to do so. This life was all new to him, and he had no idea what was correct, but it was an old story to Arline and he was content to follow her lead.

True, there was one little incident which bothered him a little, but he decided it was his own fault. He decided it was better for Mary not to learn about it. It was the night of the finals of the first tournament at Miami, an event that he won without the loss of a set. There was a dance at the Flamingo following a cocktail party at Bob Gifford's, and by the time they reached the dance he was, well, not drunk certainly, but at least—after all, he had won that day, so why inquire too closely? He had seen Mary safely dancing with a very nice young man they met at Gifford's, and he decided to stroll down to the pier where their

speedboat was waiting. He climbed into the empty craft and was idly looking at her engine when suddenly he found Arline at his elbow.

"Hello, you champion," she said. "Come on, let's go for a spin."

He turned the engine over and its roar drowned any qualms he might have had at leaving Mary with no word of where he was. Arline seized the wheel and out of the harbor raced the boat. He sat beside her, watching the beauty of her profile, silhouetted against the lights on the water, admiring her skill with the boat. She leaned back against him, bracing herself against his broad chest as she brought the boat around. Her nearness thrilled him. His arms stole around her, he bent his head toward her, and suddenly she turned her face full to him, slightly, almost questioningly raised, as she looked in his eyes. Somehow or other, his recollection of what occurred was blurred by his excitement and the wine he had drunk, but he found himself kissing her passionately, her arms around his neck. A confused yell cut into their consciousness, and she drew hastily away, seized the wheel, and by a miraculous bit of steering managed to avoid

hitting a yacht anchored directly in their path.

A ribald voice floated down from the deck: "Hey! Not a bad kiss, but for God's sake pick out some other place next time, will you?"

"Goddam fool!" Arline muttered aloud.

David, sobered suddenly by the shock of the near accident, stood up. She was right. He was a Goddam fool. It never entered his mind that her remark might have been intended for the maudlin gentleman on the yacht. Who was he to take such liberties with a girl like Arline Harker? He must have been mistaken about her arms about his neck and his kiss meeting willing response. She had distinctly said "Goddam fool" and justly so.

"I beg your pardon," he said quietly. "Let's go back!"

She swung the boat without a word, a strange little laugh cutting the silence of the next minute. They pulled up to the dock and David sprang out and offered his hand to Arline.

"Go ahead. I'll be in in a minute," she said.

So she was angry! He had known it all along. It was too much to expect her not to be.

"Very well," he said and turned away. Then

"I beg your pardon," he said again and was gone.

She gazed after him, a queer eager hungry light in her eyes.

"Goddam fool!" she said again and this time she did mean David.

CHAPTER IX

DAVID won the Miami Championships the second week as easily as he had captured the preceding week's tournament. The Florida Championship for the new Flaglen trophy, which replaced the famous one that Francis T. Hunter had retired the previous year, brought out a great entry, including not only the defending champion but also the group of young Davis Cup stars, Allison, Hennessey, Van Ryn, Lott, Shields, and Coen. David came through as expected to win the title, but he dropped a set each to Coen and Van Ryn while Hunter, after beating Lott in the semi-finals in four sets, and Hennessey in the preceding round, carried the national champion to five sets before yielding.

Mr. Harker and Arline with David and Mary came up on the yacht from Miami in

beautiful weather and with a merry company aboard. The day did much to dim Mary's unpleasant memories of the trip South. It was on the way to Palm Beach that they met the Honorable Egbert St. Clair Fitzgibbons and Miss Fanny Pratt. Arline had met them at the finals at Miami, and learning that they were *en route* to the Palm Beach tournament, invited them to join the yachting party. Miss Fanny Pratt was quite a character in the tennis world. She was a portly miss of at least five years more than the twenty-four she admitted. She was a "tennis nut." She read, talked, ate, slept, and to a distinctly minor degree played tennis day and night. She adored champions with a hero worship that verged on idolatry. She was wide of beam and built decidedly for things other than speed.

The Honorable Egbert St. Clair (the Fitzgibbons had been lost in passing) gave it out and let it be understood that he was a person of extreme importance in "dear old Lunnon," as she called it. He admitted on close questioning that his mother was an American, but failed to admit that she had parted from and subsequently divorced her husband, the Lord

Fitzgibbons of somewhere or other in England which neither she nor the Honorable Egbert could clearly recall, because the separation came when the Honorable Egbert was one year old, at which time Lady Alice Fitzgibbons returned to her parents' home in New Rochelle, New York, and her maiden name of St. Clair, there to remain to date. Her offspring, who she hoped was still heir to the Fitzgibbons estate, remained at her side, gaining education in the United States but never for a moment allowed by his mother to forget he had the blood of the English peerage in his veins. She made desperate efforts to have him known at school as the Honorable Egbert but finally gave it up upon discovering that the only title that would stick to him with the boys was "Eggie."

A high school and college career notable more for his drinking prowess than his scholastic achievements was rounded off with a season in dear old Lunnon, and there he met Miss Fanny Pratt. Miss Fanny Pratt was over for two things. First, and of foremost importance in her eyes, was to see Wimbledon, that greatest of tennis tournaments; the other was to

snare some gentleman with at least the prospects of a title. The Honorable Eggie could fulfil both wishes, for he was a tennis player of enough skill at least to possess a speaking acquaintance with the leading stars, and he was the Honorable Egbert St. Clair, possibly some day my Lord Fitzgibbons. Before Miss Pratt had left London for her trip "through Europe in twenty days," Eggie and she were engaged. It would be cruel to mention in connection with this that Miss Pratt was the possessor of a fortune of some five millions of dollars in her own right, left her by a generous parent who departed this world in the days when "Fanny" was still a girl's name.

Throughout the year of their engagement up to date the Honorable Egbert had played with Miss Pratt in at least fifty mixed doubles tournaments all over the world and had yet to advance beyond the second round, during which efforts the younger members of the modern American generation were unkind enough to say, "Eggie dragged Fanny around the court." Ah, well, maybe they were mentioning his partner.

The entire party lived on the yacht during

the week of the Florida Championship, and in the merry gatherings Mary almost forgot her irritations of the previous week. It did still annoy her to watch Arline order David around as if she owned him, but the time in the South was short. Mary decided that it was just Arline's way and meant nothing, so she could stand it for the few days that were left.

The galleries at the Royal Poinciana Hotel courts were an unending thrill to Mary. David was once more the center of attention, and as his wife she met everyone. She was overwhelmed at the courtesy of the Tony Biddles, the Stotesburys, and the other social leaders she had long read about. For some reason she was surprised and a little disappointed to find them human like herself and simple in their greetings. She was thrilled at meeting Flo Ziegfeld and his beautiful wife, Billie Burke, while Fanny Ward, Irving Berlin and his wife, the former Miss Mackay, Irene Bordoni, Louise Homer, Reinald Werrenrath, and the many other noted artists she met, and with whom she chatted, filled Mary's week at Palm Beach with just one big kick after another.

It was true that she had a few anxious mo-

ments during the first few days that Miss Pratt and the Honorable Egbert were on board. Miss Pratt settled down to an adoring worship of David that was most annoying to Mary until she discovered that it embarrassed and annoyed David even more. Then it struck her as funny. She enjoyed watching him squirm under Fanny's ardent gaze and low murmur of:

"Oh, you marvellous man, I think you are just too wonderful."

It was not until David knew Fanny better and learned about her hero worship of any and all tennis champions that he overcame his dismay at the sight of her and finally learned to really like her.

Mary had one slight episode with the Honorable Eggie that shocked and pained her. It was the evening before the finals and David had returned to the yacht to retire early, leaving the rest of the party at a dance at the Biddles'. Mary had attempted to escape with him, but David had insisted on her staying, so she gave in, especially when she caught a gleam of scorn in Arline Harker's eye at her suggestion to go home with David.

The party from the yacht broke away about three o'clock, the Harkers' big limousine and their small roadster, the latter driven by the Honorable Eggie, waiting to run them to the docks. Mary started for the limousine, a big cloak of Miss Pratt's, which she had picked up by mistake on leaving the yacht that evening, over her shoulders. Suddenly she felt herself grabbed from behind, rushed to the roadster, pushed in, and before she realized what it was all about she was dashing through the night with the Honorable Eggie at the wheel. It had been quite an evening for the Honorable Eggie and by now he was in and around good spirits and plenty of them. Suddenly he turned, roughly caught Mary with his free arm, pulled her to him and with great earnestness kissed her vigorously.

"My darling, my dearest," he said alcoholically.

"My good sir!" Mary said haughtily, if a little breathlessly.

The Honorable Eggie turned and looked long and surprisedly into her face.

"My God!" he said, indistinctly, and in silence they reached the docks.

Mary rose with dignity and stepped out upon the dock. She had made up her mind to tell David everything. She would not hide such an outrage from him. She would never trust the Honorable Egbert again. What had she done to give him cause for such familiarity? It was this terrible life, a life that weakened the moral fiber of even such people as she herself. In silence she entered the tender and, on reaching the yacht, went directly to her cabin. Her eyes fell on her reflection in the mirror. Oh, yes, she had forgotten to return Fanny Pratt's cloak. Fanny Pratt's cloak! Suddenly she started to laugh. Poor Eggie! No wonder he had said "My God!" after that kiss. Maybe she wouldn't tell David after all. She decided Eggie's punishment had been sufficient, but just the same she wouldn't trust him too far again.

The weeks that followed Palm Beach were busy ones for David and Mary. Mr. Harker decided to put off the trip to the Riviera until next year, but arranged for them to reach France early in April, so that David would have plenty of time to become acclimatized before the French Championships at the end

of May. This necessitated arranging about Billy. David did not want to take him out of school, which did not close until early in June. It seemed foolish for him to join them that late in the trip, but the boy was eager to see the finals at Wimbledon and the Davis Cup matches in France, so finally Mr. Harker settled the matter by telling David that he would send one of his secretaries over with Billy to see that the youngster had company on the voyage. Meanwhile Billy arrived home for the Easter vacation to find David and Mary in the throes of packing. They sailed for Europe the day after he returned to school. The apartment looked as if a cyclone had struck it. All it needed was the irresponsible Billy to complete the wreck.

David was busy at the office. He had been pleasantly surprised to find several large sales to his credit on his return from the South, due to the fact that in his absence a few tennis enthusiasts had stopped in at the office to see him and did not escape before the high-pressure salesman lurking in ambush for just such victims had done his work. David, as the decoy that had brought the game within hunt-

ing distance, was given credit for the sales. Several of his newly-made friends of Palm Beach and Miami had promised to call upon him at the office in the near future following their return, so David was spending much of his time at his desk awaiting their arrival. They came, they saw—him and were seen by the high-pressure salesman. The latter waited within earshot until the talk had passed through the usual channels of tennis past, present, and future, and gave evidence of lagging, when he, the salesman, felt a sudden urge to speak to Mr. Cooper about some particularly good investment for one of Mr. Cooper's particular personal clients. Naturally Mr. Cooper introduced the salesman to his visitor, who equally naturally was assumed by the salesman to be a very close friend of Mr. Cooper, a most flattering moment for the visitor. Well, of course, any close friend of Mr. Cooper's should be given the special opportunity that it was their privilege to afford, so—well, many had called but few had chosen—to say no. Not only was David regular and late at the office, but what time he could spare from business was taken up in selecting his

tennis equipment for abroad. Long and earnest were his conferences at Spalding's with Sam Hardy over the weight, balance, and handle size of his racquets for abroad, the gut he would use, and the amount he would need. Sam, with his years of international experience, gave him much valuable advice on his coming trip.

David would return home dog-tired to find Mary equally weary from her shopping tours and packing. Only Billy was eager for excitement, and it required his most persuasive efforts to stir them from their home to the theater.

Billy was a little worried. He had had an experience that caused him some thought. All during his winter at school he had thought of Alice. He had written her regularly. It is true that both thoughts and letters had grown less regular after the Christmas vacation, during which he had attended several dances of the younger set in New York, dances to which Arline Harker had engineered his invitations and passed the word along to see he had a good time. Somehow on his return to school Billy found it harder to write to Alice, but easy to

write several of the girls he had met during vacation. Still Alice was "his girl" and wonderful. He knew it.

One day during the Easter vacation Billy emerged from Spalding's Nassau Street store slightly handicapped by a new baseball glove and two new tennis racquets, none of which he would allow out of his sight long enough to be sent to the apartment. He was dressed in the last word in sports clothes and was as fine a picture of American boyhood as one could find. He turned up Fifth Avenue in time to run plump into someone coming the other way. He backed off and unsuccessfully attempted to lift his soft brown hat with a hand overfilled with baseball gloves. He was aggrieved. His dignity was injured.

"I beg your pardon," he said with his best St. Bernard manner.

"Billy!" A girl's voice, eager, happy, familiar, brought his eyes to the offending person who had run into him.

It was Alice.

"Alice!" he cried, dropping his racquets and gloves and grabbing her hands.

"Oh, Billy, it's too wonderful! I wondered

if I'd see you." Alice was laughing into his face.

"What ya doing here?" Billy was once more in Hobansville.

"Father had to come East on business and couldn't leave me home. We were going back to-night."

"Gee, that's swell, no, I mean it's tough you're going so soon, but it's swell you're here. Let's see a pitcher-show this afternoon. Whaddya say?"

"Sure, Billy, I'd love to."

"Where'll I meet you?"

"Father and I are at the Pennsylvania Hotel."

"O.K. I'll be there at two o'clock. So long. Gee, it's swell to see you, Alice."

"It's wonderful to see you, too, Billy. You look wonderful."

"Aw, cut it out." Billy grinned and picked up the racquets and glove. "See you at two. So long," and he swung up the street.

Alice stood watching him as he disappeared. "Isn't he wonderful!" she murmured.

Billy was in a daze. He had been so flustered meeting Alice that he had no idea how she

looked. He called from his memory his rosiest pictures of her and decided that that was just the way she looked that morning. Well, anyway, he'd look her over closely this afternoon. Gee, she was prettier than any girl he'd seen in New York, even if he'd forgotten it at Christmas when she wasn't there. Gosh, if only two o'clock would come!

At precisely one forty-seven and a half Mr. William Cooper sent his name up to Miss Alice Brown and at one-fifty-two and a quarter, in direct conflict with all social custom that demands of any young lady that she keep her swain waiting at least half an hour, Alice appeared. Billy was all set for the vision his memory and imagination had painted.

Both had been, let us say, a little too generous. Out from the elevator stepped a familiar yet quite unknown figure. It was a little girl in a cheap ill-fitting suit and unbecoming hat, a dowdy little mite, whose hair was long and fastened in a bunch at the back of her head. Her stockings were cotton and her shoes stubby and ugly. Yet on her face was a smile of happy greeting. It was Alice.

Billy rose to his feet, dismay in his heart.

Panic seized him. Was he going to take this funny-looking girl to the movies? His best St. Bernard party smile came to the rescue.

"Hello," she said. "Sorry I kept you waiting."

"That's all right. Come on, let's go." He hustled her out to a taxi. He wasn't going to walk along the street with her looking like that and have some of the gang from school see him. Gosh! Why hadn't he looked at her that morning? All that the fellows at school talked about in a girl was how good-looking she was and how well she dressed. Gee, this was awful.

They arrived at the theater. Billy hustled Alice in and picked one of the darkest spots he could find. It was decidedly not for the reason that such a spot is usually so eagerly sought.

Alice, a little surprised at how quiet he was, did not allow it to worry her but enjoyed the picture hugely. Even Billy, in the sheltering darkness, forgot his fear of discovery with such a looking girl long enough to get a real kick out of the picture. When the end came he was more himself. He and Alice went out to the street at an almost decent pace. No longer was he hurrying her along in desperation.

"Hey there, Cooper! Hello!" A boy's voice rudely shattered Billy's peace.

He looked up. There were Ted Black and Bobby Whiteside, two of his classmates, with two little girls dressed in the height of fashion and beautiful in the jazz manner of the moment.

He lifted his hat politely. "How do you do!" he said frigidly, and hustled Alice into a waiting cab.

All the way back to the hotel, even while he talked to Alice, he could hear in his mind the boys at school. "Who was the funny-looking skirt, Cooper, you had at Roxy's?" and the side comments that would follow. What a fool he had been! He was definitely ashamed of Alice.

None of this reached Alice's consciousness in any way. She thought Billy quiet, but it never entered her mind she was the cause. She said good-bye at the hotel with real regret.

"Thanks so much, Billy. I had a wonderful time."

St. Bernard's training stood Billy in good stead. "I'm so glad you could come," he said with his society smile.

"Oh, Billy, I'm so glad I saw you. Good-bye, and don't forget to write." Alice waved her hand as she turned.

"No, I won't," he said—and he knew he didn't mean it. He would never write Alice again. He didn't want to see her again. That was over. She wasn't "his girl" any more.

And what worried Billy was the fact that he had ever been fool enough to think that Alice was his girl. He was not yet old enough to know that what should have worried him was the change in him that made him want to forget her.

CHAPTER X

David and Mary were on the ocean. They were two days out. Billy was back in school, not too seriously engaged with studies but very much engrossed with baseball and tennis. The apartment was closed, and for the moment at least David and Mary felt that all their worries were forgotten and only the present with its thrilling new experiences counted at all. Mary had wanted to buy almost a new wardrobe for this trip abroad, but at the insistence of Arline Harker had decided to wait until she reached Paris. Arline had promised to conduct her personally on a tour of all the best shops, so that while crossing the ocean Mary was in a flutter of anticipation that could hardly be controlled. Both Mary and David had faced the sea trip with fear and trembling based on their unhappy experience

on the way to Miami, but they soon found that there was a great difference between even such a yacht as *The Love Set* and a great floating palace like the *Ile de France*. Mary had one anxious moment before the boat left dock, when she inadvertently walked into the main saloon to be met by the riot of red and gold modernistic art. A sudden sensation strangely like acute seasickness stirred her, but a hasty retreat from the awful room brought immediate relief. Mary's sense of propriety was a trifle dismayed at the nudity of the various statues found unexpectantly here and there in the big saloons, and she felt that she should exercise great care in whose company she should be in such places, but there was no real escape from them, so she made up her mind to make the best of it by completely ignoring the statues.

David had been on the wagon since Palm Beach and was once more his usual impetuous, lovable self. Back in New York, with no tennis on his mind, no chance for Arline to be on hand every minute, ordering him here or there, and no succession of cocktail parties and dances for women to make fools of themselves

over him and to snub and ignore her, Mary had found the strain between them had disappeared and life was once more happy and wonderful. And now on the ocean the days of rest, watching the rise and fall of the blue water, sparkling in the sun, filled her with peace. It was a welcome relief after the hullabaloo of Miami and Palm Beach. At times she almost dreaded landing in France, there to pick up once more the glamorous chase of fame for David. She was much alone on board the boat, for the Harkers were initiating David into the mysteries of contract bridge in the daytime and busy buying numbers in the auction pool at night. David loved gambling and took to contract like a duck to water. Mary hated cards and was far happier in her deck chair reading than sitting in the smoke room watching. However, David was always thoughtful of her comfort and never left her without reporting where he would be, so Mary was content and at peace with the world.

There were times on the voyage when David wished Mary had bought her new wardrobe in New York before sailing. Somehow her evening dresses never quite seemed in keeping

with the brilliant costumes of the other women on board. David did not expect Mary to dress as Arline dressed. He knew now that was far beyond his means, but he did wish she had the chic, stylish appearance of the majority of the women on board. He wished, too, that Mary cared more for games of all sorts. It would be wonderful if they could play contract together against the Harkers. He had asked her several times to learn, but her refusals had been so definite, finally even petulant, that he had given it up. After all, if she didn't want to learn why should she? He knew that she did not approve of playing cards for money, but since she did not argue with him about his playing why should he insist on her learning cards against her will? David recognized that Mary's interests did not run along the lines of his present life. Out in Hobansville she shared his views and his interests fully, but somehow since they had married and come to New York she did not seem to grasp his problems or sympathize with them. He had an uneasy feeling that she disapproved of much that he did, even though she never said anything. He even felt she disapproved a little of Billy, and

he was almost certain that she disapproved of Arline. He could see no grounds for any of this disapproval.

The voyage passed pleasantly and uneventfully, so that their arrival at the George V in Paris brought to an end a quiet interlude in the rush of their lives. The weeks in Paris before the French Championship started were all too short. Arline was playing in the women's singles, and with David in the mixed, so part of every day was claimed by practice at the Stade Roland Garros in Autreuil where the championships were to be held.

Mary's first impressions of Paris were tinged with disappointment. It had an air of familiarity that she vaguely resented. She did not want to find things she knew, yet seeing the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe, and the Place de la Concorde for the first time was like meeting with old friends. She had seen too many pictures of them, both in books and in news-reels. It was another story when she began to visit the shops. Arline Harker, happy in once more being in her beloved Paris, was at her friendliest and most charming, and made Mary feel at home quickly. In and out along

the Rue de la Paix Arline led a glittering way as she bought this and that to please her fancy. Nor did she forget Mary's needs, and she steered Mary in and out of marvelous costumers, lingerie stores, hat, glove, and stocking shops, overseeing this purchase or negatively deciding against that until finally Mary called a halt, declaring she was fully equipped for any and all emergencies. Arline had done her best to influence Mary's selection of gowns, but was only partially successful in her persuasion. Mary would not buy the ultra models that Arline urged on her, feeling, as she expressed it, "practically naked" in most of them. She loved pretty clothes, but could not stand what she felt was downright immodesty. Mary was delighted with her new costumes, and David was pleased at her pleasure. He did not tell her that he preferred Arline's style, but he secretly wished Mary had not been quite so conservative. Somehow she still lacked chicness in her dress.

Mary found the little cafés in the Bois du Boulogne much to her liking. She loved the soft music, the coolness under the wonderful trees, the colored lights and the well-dressed

people. She felt of it, yet was not called upon to meet and mingle with the crowd.

One night she would never forget. Mr. Harker had an old friend, Tudor Wilkinson, who lived in Paris. Mr. Wilkinson and his charming wife, one of the most famous beauties of her day, lived in a wonderful apartment, furnished in a period of centuries before, filled with the art treasures of that period which Mr. Wilkinson had spent years of his life collecting.

Only the Harkers, David, and herself had been present for dinner. Mary knew nothing of art or the history of the Old World of which Mr. Harker, Arline, and the Wilkinsons talked, but something of its beauty, its romance, and its glory entered her soul as she listened to them and gazed on the cameo-like beauty of Dolores Wilkinson, whose charm made of this historic apartment not only a wonderful treasure house of art but a home as well.

From such moments come real education, a growth of mind and a desire for knowledge far more important than any education school or college can offer. It opened Mary's eyes to a new world, a world of beauty, far beyond the

petty annoyances or spasmodic pleasures of her present life. It gave her a glimpse of what the culture of Europe really means if only Americans will open their eyes and grasp its significance. She could see David expanding under the glow of the atmosphere. He talked, gave his opinions, and asked questions about things of which she knew he knew nothing. He did it in an eager, naïve way that made him charming. He took his place in the gathering and held his own. She could only sit silent, proud of him, but incapable of joining in with the rest. She knew she was out of her depth in that room, yet within her for the first time rose a desire some day to find her place in such a gathering.

David felt no lack in Mary that night. He did not sense her inhibition, nor if he had would he have regretted it here. There were other times when he wished she were more of a sport, a better mixer. He recalled with a bit of amusement mixed with a good deal of shame the way she arose at the Folies Bérgère and said, "Come, David, I'm going home," during a spectacular scene in which one member of the chorus was impersonating Venus in the nude.

There was nothing to do but go, for there was that in Mary's voice that spoke volumes of her intention to depart forthwith and be no more seen in such accursed spots. He was glad at the time she did not know French, for from the laughter of the house around him and several whispered explanations from Arline of a couple of the jokes already told, he feared Mary would have departed long before she did. A momentary pang of regret at his own lack of knowledge of French made him feel slightly disloyal to Mary.

Mary was as strictly dry in France as she was in the United States, but as David was still on the wagon this did not bother him. Arline knew all the places to go in Paris from the Ritz to Florence's in Montmartre. Almost every day found David, Mary, and Arline returning from the Stade Roland Garros to the Ritz bar to waste an hour in idle chatter with the other Americans who seemed to make it their daily rendezvous. David had a difficult time to avoid falling off the wagon, but he was forgiven his sobriety by the others owing to the coming tournament. Arline was circumspect, but would join the crowd in a

cocktail or two, but Mary with no such excuse found her persistent refusals made her conspicuous and just a little of a wet blanket. Mary sensed the feeling and withdrew even further into herself. David felt a pang of almost embarrassment at her attitude. If only she were more like Arline!

The days crept by swiftly and the French Championship was at hand. David was drawn on Lacoste's side of the tournament while Borotra, De Morpurgo, and Cochet were the strength of the other. Two nights before the championships, the Honorable Egbert and Miss Fanny Pratt appeared. The Harkers with David and Mary were dining at Les Ambassadeurs, where the cabaret with Clifton Webb, Helen Morgan, and several other leading American stars was proving the sensation of the moment in Paris. David was dancing with Arline when suddenly they were bumped violently from the rear and an excited voice burst in their ears:

"Oh, you wonderful man, it's too marvelous to see you again. Arline, darling, I'm so delighted to see you, too. Egbert and I are here to see the championships. Oh, I'm so excited,

Mr. Cooper, I just know you're going to win. You're just too wonderful."

It was indeed Fanny Pratt and the Honorable Eggie. David thought he had rather a hunted, harried look as he shook hands and attempted to steer Fanny off the dance floor, but Fanny would have none of it.

"My dear," Fanny grabbed Arline, "Egbert and I are going to be married in England during Wimbledon, and where do you suppose? You'll never guess. Oh, yes, Mr. Cooper, how's your charming wife? Why, there she is. Yoo hoo," she waved a hand as an added effort while Fanny caught a long breath. "Yes, Arline, you'll never guess I'm going to be married on the centre court at Wimbledon."

"The centre court!" Arline and David spoke in chorus as the swirling dancers jostled them out to the side like a bit of flotsam cast up on a beach by the waves.

"Yes, the centre court. I've made up my mind. Egbert says I don't play well enough to get into the Wimbledon tournament and I've made up my mind to get on that centre court some way. So I'll be married there."

"But, Fanny, dear——" began Egbert in a

low tone. David was not surprised now at his harassed look.

"Now Egbert, don't argue with me. I'm going to do it. I don't know yet, but I've made up my mind. Well, toodle-doo, you two. Give your wife my love, you wonderful man—we'll see you later. Come on, Egbert, dance with me," and Fanny clutched the helpless Egbert in a mighty clasp as they plunged into the dancers.

Arline laughed as she led the way to their table. "She'll probably do it, too," she said quietly. "That's just like Fanny. Now she has arrived the tournament can start. No tournament is really complete without her."

CHAPTER XI

The French Championships proved to be a memorable occasion. In the first place David did not win it. He was eliminated by René Lacoste in the semi-final after five bitter sets. It was a bitter blow to David and Mary but not entirely unexpected by Arline and Mr. Harker, who knew something of the difficulties attending the first attempt to play abroad. However, one thing was definitely established. David was a popular figure with the French galleries. His magnetic personality appealed to them with much the same force as did that of their own Borotra. The public crowded his court whenever he played. The demands for his autographs, particularly from the girls, were tremendous. Mary was delighted with his personal triumph, but wished that it were not quite so heartily expressed by the women.

Mary loved the Stade Roland Garros. She was the guest of honor, so to speak, of the French Associations, treated with equal importance to Arline or Mr. Harker. Pierre Gillou, the guiding genius of French tennis, his associates of the committee and also the great stars Lacoste, Cochet, Borotra, and Brugnon, with true French courtesy, showered attentions on the wife of the champion of the United States, and though it embarrassed Mary a little she enjoyed it to the utmost. She loved the setting of the Stade Roland Garros. The great concrete bowl, seating fifteen thousand persons, surrounding the perfect red clay court, had an informal homey atmosphere she liked. Somehow the trees, flower boxes, and flags had a gala quality that made her feel like a kid out at a party. There was none of that cold businesslike air that was the outstanding feature of the stadium at West Side Tennis Club at home. She still was deeply bored by too much tennis talk in the evenings, but at least the actual play at Stade Roland Garros she enjoyed. Her eyes were opened to the importance that the sport and its stars held in the social scheme in Europe. She was

tremendously proud of the deference paid David as champion of the United States.

How Mary suffered during that match with Lacoste! Throughout the five long bitterly waged sets she sat beside M. Gillou in the committee box, with Arline and Mr. Harker on her other side. Somehow David did not seem to be playing as well as usual. She was sure that the linesmen were in error repeatedly, in which belief she was doubtless often right, but they were no more so than the linesmen at home. She expressed her views loudly and at random, undismayed and undeterred by the reproving glances shot at her from Arline and Mr. Harker. It was her husband, no relation of theirs, that was being beaten by that unsmiling machine out there. For the moment she forgot all his courtesy and hated Lacoste with a deep and bitter hate. The real truth of the match was that David played just as well as he was allowed. Lacoste, with his machine-like game at its best, kept him always on the run. David found difficulty in getting speed out of the Dunlop ball, a ball which was quite new to him and which somehow seemed to flatten on his racquet and float back despite his best

efforts to hit it hard. He reached a lead of 4—2 in the fifth and final set, but at that point Lacoste's uncanny ability to keep the ball in play, aided by the pressure from the enormous gallery who were whole-heartedly willing victory for their own champion and defeat for the American, broke David's control, and in a flood of errors he was swept out of the tournament 3—6, 7—5, 2—6, 8—6, 6—4.

He came off the court a bitterly disappointed man. The thought of defeat had never entered his head. He had been convinced he would win the tournament. He dressed in a daze and joined Mary in the committee box.

"Oh, David, I'm so sorry," she greeted him, tears in her eyes, her voice loud in her excitement. "It wasn't your fault. It was just a case that you were off your game. Then the linesmen cheated you and that nasty Lacoste was too lucky."

David shuddered to his core. This was the last straw. He had hoped he and all the others, particularly Mary, would take it like good sports, and here she was making a fool of him and herself and America right in the committee box. He turned sharply to her.

"No, Mary, you're wrong. Lacoste was too good, that was all. The lining was perfect." His voice was harsh. He hoped she would sense his annoyance.

Mary was far too overwrought to sense that or anything except her disappointment.

"Now, David, don't be foolish. I saw! I saw every stroke. You were cheated by those horrid men, and Lacoste was lucky if nothing worse."

"Mary, let's not discuss it now."

"I will discuss it if I want to," Mary's voice rose higher, a hint of tears in it now.

"Not now, Mary," he said sternly.

"Why, David"—tears rose to her eyes. "Why, how can you speak so? I tell you I know you were cheated——"

David rose to his feet abruptly. He turned to M. Gillou.

"If you'll excuse us," he said quietly, "I think we will go in to the hotel. My wife is very tired." He gave his hand to Mary, who obediently rose and passed from the box, escorted by M. Gillou. Arline hastily jumped up.

"I'm tired, I'm coming too, David," she said.

Mary never forgot that walk out to the car. She sensed David's deep anger but could not understand it. She saw him following with Arline and sensed they were speaking of her. She hardly heard M. Gillou as he talked.

"Ah, Mrs. Cooper, do not worry about today. René was lucky. He played very well, but your husband, Daveed, he is not yet in form. It will be deferent in the Davis Cup. He is a very great player."

Mary sensed his desire to be kind and soften the blow of the defeat, but her own hurt was too great to go without expression.

"Those linesmen were just horrid," she said. "They made so many mistakes against David."

M. Gillou bowed. "Yes, Mrs. Cooper," he said, "but they made just as many against Lacoste. I'm sorry the lining was not better."

Arline and David came up just in time to hear the last remark. David cut in sharply:

"Mr. Gillou, the lining was excellent. If anything, Lacoste got the worst of it, if there were any mistakes. That had nothing to do with the result of the match."

Arline's voice jumped into the breach.

"I watched closely and thought the decisions were remarkably fair all the way through," she said clearly.

David had hurried Mary into the waiting car and was holding the door for Arline. She jumped in and David turned to M. Gillou and held out his hand.

"Good-bye, and thank you," he said. "Tell Lacoste I enjoyed the match."

Pierre Gillou grasped his hand.

"Ah, Daveed," he said, "you are a great sportsman. Our French people love you. Good-bye."

M. Gillou stood at the gate and watched the car drive away.

"Ah, my poor David," he murmured. "I am afraid you will have a hard time. The little lady, she does not know tennis," and with a sad smile, for he liked David, he turned back to the stadium.

★ ★ ★

There was a council of war in session in the sitting room of the Harker suite at the George V.

Mr. Harker had arrived full of fears of the international angle of Mary's unfortunate conduct. Americans were unpopular enough in France, so he believed, without such incidents as this to make it worse. He determined, as a member of the executive committee of the United States Lawn Tennis Association, to tell Mary just what he thought. He arrived to find David in full blast, expressing his views to an ominously quiet Mary and an obviously restrained Arline.

"Why, Mary,"—David was red in the face and almost panting as he strode up and down the room—"don't you realize that you made me a fool, and worse than a fool, in the eyes of the French. They must think that I have the same ideas you have. You accused those men of deliberately cheating me out of the match. That's a terrible accusation! It's unwarranted! Unjust! Can't you see that the one time you never can open your mouth is when you are beaten? It's not good sportsmanship. Even if what you claimed was true, which it isn't, you should not have said it. It's a disgrace."

Mr. Harker cut in.

"Yes, David, you are right. It was a disgrace. Mary disgraced America in the eyes of France."

Arline's clear voice cut in coldly.

"Well, what can you expect? She is not a sportswoman."

Mary rose to her feet; ignoring Mr. Harker and Arline, she spoke quietly to David.

"I'll be in my room if you want me, David," a faint emphasis italicized the word "you."

"Wait, Mary, we have more to say——" David paused. He was speaking only to the closed door.

Mary went directly to her room and threw herself on the bed. She did not cry. The whole thing was too childish to warrant tears. What had she done? According to all she could make out from the disjointed, incoherent orations of David and the two remarks of the Harkers was that she had insulted France, disgraced America, personally shamed the Harkers and David, brought France and America to the point of war, outraged hospitality, committed the unpardonable sin of not being a sportswoman—in fact in this last lay the dire cause of all the trouble. She felt she had merely been

true to herself. She had stood up for the man she loved, her husband. She thought he had played badly, had been cheated, and that his opponent was lucky and she had said so, clearly, truthfully, and possibly, she admitted to herself, too loudly and tactlessly. She knew she was not fitted for this sporting life. She should never have come to Europe. No, it went farther back than that. She should never have allowed David to plunge into it. For a moment she wondered if she should ever have married David. Yes, certainly she should. He was her man and she loved him. Her mistake was in leaving Hobansville and allowing him to. Yet if it hadn't been for his tennis they might not have been married yet; in fact, might never have been in a position to marry. However, the present problem had to be solved. Either she must get their point of view or they must get hers. What was the solution? She closed her eyes. Somehow she couldn't think clearly, and her head ached. She'd rest a little while. Gradually her breath grew soft. She slept.

The opening door roused her to consciousness. David stood in the doorway. He stole to

the bed, his arms crept around her, his cheek rested beside hers.

"Mary!"

"Yes, David?"

"I'm sorry I was such a pig. I guess it was disappointment at my licking. I'm not too good a sport."

"Aren't you, dear—I'm glad."

"Why, Mary, what do you mean?"

"Nothing, dear. Kiss me! Now let's go to dinner."

"Am I forgiven, Mary?"

"Yes, David."

"So are you, dear."

"Yes, David. What for?"

"Not being a good sport to-day."

"Thanks, David."

A slight pause, and Mary rose to her feet.

"Does that need forgiveness?" She laughed a little and continued: "I don't think it does."

CHAPTER XII

Mr. Harker and Arline were left speechless for a moment at Mary's calm exit. David, with a muttered word of apology, picked up his hat and plunged out the door. He did not dare trust himself to say anything. The door closed behind him with a vigorous bang that roused the Harkers.

"Well, my dear," said Mr. Harker, taking a large cigar from his pocket and biting off the end with a viciousness that showed how deeply he was annoyed, "that young woman needs a lesson. She has no idea what an embarrassing position she placed us in this afternoon."

Arline laughed shortly.

"She hasn't! You are quite right. What's more, if she did she wouldn't understand or care!"

"She must be made to understand!" Mr. Harker's cigar was bobbing up and down in his mouth. He was too mad to realize he was speaking around it. In moments of irritation his acquired polish dropped from him and his inherent crudeness showed through the veneer. "I cannot permit such things to happen. What will the French think? Why, it's just disgraceful. Such a thing might well offset all the good that David's fine play and sportsmanship could do. I was proud of David. He took his defeat like a man. Yes, sir, I'm proud of him."

"You need never worry about David, Dad." Arline leaned over to pick up a cigarette from the table. "He is not your problem. It's Mary. She is all wet about David and his tennis."

"Well, she can't be," he snapped. "I'll speak to her!"

"I wouldn't if I were you," Arline smiled reminiscently. "David didn't get very far just now when he tried it, and I don't believe you will."

"Now, Arline, something drastic must be done and at once. We can't have the same

breach of sportsmanship happening out here again to-morrow."

"Don't worry, Dad, it won't! David is already beaten, so the same situation won't arise again, at least in this tournament. I'm sure Mary won't refer to the Lacoste match to-day."

"Maybe you are right, dear." Mr. Harker had cooled off to a point now where his cigar was no longer suffering a terrific beating. He even removed it from his mouth before speaking and was once more the urbane, suave clubman of his public moments. "However, I know one thing. Mary is a very bad influence in David's life. Her lack of sporting instinct, her desire to alibi his defeats, and her lack of knowledge of international courtesies all combine to work against David in his tennis. Something must be done."

Arline rose from her chair.

"Well, Dad, speaking to Mary at present would be the very worst thing you could do!"

"Then I will speak to David." Mr. Harker spoke with great emphasis.

"No, you won't, not if you are as clever as I know you to be. Let it drop for the present.

See what happens. I must dress. So long, dear," and Arline smiled at him as she passed on her way to her room.

Once safely hidden in the privacy of her boudoir, Arline's smile faded before the anxiety that crept into her eyes. She was worried, far more worried than she would admit to her father. He was quite right about Mary. She was a bad influence in David's life. Mary did not and never would understand for what this world of international sport stood. How could she? She was not a sportswoman. Arline could not excuse Mary because of her ignorance but she was wise enough to understand it. Arline did not give a snap of her fingers for the "international courtesy" aspect that so worried her father. She knew the French officials well enough to understand that they would overlook and forgive Mary's lapse. It was David around whom her fears centred. No man could long afford to be placed in the position into which Mary had forced David to-day. He could not play tennis under such a strain, always having to guard against such scenes. Mary placed him in a trap from which there was no escape. If he agreed with her,

acquiesced by silence, even, he was at once stamped as a poor sportsman and a man who could not lose gracefully. If he remonstrated with her, as he had, then Mary carried the argument to a point where David was forced to be openly rude to his wife, making him look a boor in the eyes of all present. Arline fiercely resented this injustice to David.

Suddenly she walked to her mirror and studied her beauty in the glass. She saw a lovely face in which the eyes smoldered with restrained anger and love. Yes, that was it, love. Love for David. There was no use trying to fool herself. She loved David. Loved him passionately, overwhelmingly, protectingly. She had always recognized the tremendous physical attraction he held for her, but to-day had opened her eyes to his other strong appeal. She wanted to protect him, to fight for him, to mother him. She resented Mary because Mary held the power to hurt David, hurt him personally and also in the eyes of the great world, his world, Arline's world, the world to which David belonged! Yes, she loved David! She was not ashamed of it, she gloried in it! She had been attracted by many men during

her eventful life but none had ever roused in her this desire to fight for and protect, which just at the moment was her outstanding feeling for David.

She slowly started to take off her gown preparatory to dressing for dinner, her mind seeking ways and means to help David. She knew that he and she together could scale any social heights, could rule the sporting and social world, yet standing there, blocking their way by her very stupidity, her lack of sportsmanship, her commonplaceness, loomed Mary, his wife. Why had David ever married her? God, what a fool he had been. Mary, his wife! That drab little mouse of a girl in the place that any woman on earth should be proud to be. The wife of the champion of the United States! The wife of the greatest figure in international sport! God! Mary didn't have intelligence enough to appreciate it and to fill that position as it should be filled. All she did was to attempt to drag David down to her middle-class level.

It was a ridiculous situation. It could not go on. David must be extricated from the results of his unfortunate mistake in marrying Mary.

He didn't love Mary, Arline was sure of that. He couldn't! She would save him from himself. She would set out to save him from Mary. Mary deserved no consideration. She had had her chance and thrown it away. It was David who must be protected. She, Arline, would do it. She would make him forget Mary and turn to her. Once free from Mary and married to her, there were no limits to the heights to which David might rise. She knew she must be careful. She knew David well enough to know that he must be saved without his knowledge. He was too fine a man, too great a sportsman, to sanction anything which might seem unfair to Mary. He would rebel and revolt against this plan of hers if he learned of it. It would take time and patience, but with both she knew she could save David and win his love.

Once more her subtle smile curved her beautiful lips. She opened the door of her wardrobe and with care selected an evening gown that David had once admired. She would fire her opening gun in his defense that night.

Her voice rose in a little song:

"'I love you truly, truly, dear.'"

CHAPTER XIII

David and Mary were at the Savoy Hotel in London. Arline and Mr. Harker stayed over in Paris for a week following the French Championship to allow Arline time to complete her coming season's wardrobe and for Mr. Harker to draw to a successful conclusion several large business deals that were pending. David felt it was essential to start practice on grass courts as long prior to Wimbledon as possible, so he and Mary left immediately after the finals. Mary fell in love with London at once. She did not experience quite the same sense of disappointment in the familiarity of landmarks as she knew in Paris. There was something about the simple grandeur of the Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace, and particularly Westminster Abbey that rose above just the familiar pictured outlines she

recognized. They carried to her soul the thrill she had hoped for and, until then, never found. She loved the dignity, courtesy, and formality of English life. The place she enjoyed least was the Savoy Hotel with its bustle, rush, and ever-changing throng. It reminded her too forcibly of New York hotels. David on the other hand was delighted with the Savoy. Every day he met someone whom he had known in New York. They all showered him with invitations to dine or to the theater or to something which he was forced to decline with regret.

Still he enjoyed the blaze of the spotlight in which he moved. Everywhere in the hotel he was pointed out as the American champion. He did wish Mary enjoyed society more. He would have been pleased to accept many of the invitations accorded them but he knew she would not enjoy the affairs. She preferred to stay in in the evening, or to go to a picture or theater just with him. She was embarrassed by the obvious interest his presence created in any public place. He knew she was uncomfortable at the stir their entrance into the Savoy grill or the Ritz dining room always

caused. He could see her shrink as all eyes turned their way as they took their seats in the theater. He also regretted that no matter how much money she spent on her clothes they always looked as if they had been made for someone other than Mary. Yet he adored her loyalty, love, and above all her upright, honest character. She was a wonderful girl. He had no grounds for complaint. He still wished that he had said a little more to her about good sportsmanship and how important it was. He hoped she had learned her lesson in Paris. The affair had never been mentioned between them again after that day, but David had an uneasy feeling that he had not impressed Mary at all. Somehow he felt he had come off worst in that conflict.

David played at Beckenham, Roehampton, and Queen's Club before Wimbledon. He was unexpectedly beaten by Ohta in the second round at Beckenham before he had time to become accustomed to grass, but as he had told Mary to expect his defeat it did not cause much grief. After all it was only a little tournament. He reached the final at Roehampton, but rain caused a washout and the singles were

divided between him and J. G. Gregory, the English player. The American Davis Cup team arrived in time for Queen's, but all fell by the wayside except F. T. Hunter, whom David beat in four sets in the final round. Mary was thrilled at his new title, champion of London. Somehow it seemed far more impressive to her than champion of the United States, due probably to the fact that she was more intimately acquainted with the United States.

Billy arrived the day before the finals at Queen's Club. He had passed his school work by a narrow margin, but as star of the baseball team, first singles player and school champion at tennis, and voted the best athlete in school, he regarded his first year in St. Bernard's with complacency. Only one thing marred the spring term. David had lost the French Championship to Lacoste, an incident that had required a good deal of explanation on the part of Master Billy Cooper. It had caused him so much trouble that even now, a month later, he was still a bit annoyed at Dave about it.

Almost his first words to David, after a rather indifferent greeting, had to do with it.

"You're a hell of a guy to get licked by that Frog! What's the big idea?"

"Sorry, Billy. He was too good." David smiled at the boy.

"Aw, no he wasn't! Gee, the gang at school sure gave me the berry about you. And gosh, Dave, I couldn't say much, you know. I had to be a good sport and not alibi for you."

Dave shot a keen glance at Mary, who was reading near at hand. He hoped she heard that remark.

"That's right, Billy. No alibis for me. You always were a good sport."

Mary closed her book and smiled at Billy.

"Sorry you weren't there, Billy. David needed you," she said quietly.

"Say, gee, Mary, tell me the whole thing sometime, will you? I'll never get it out of Dave!"

"Yes. I'll tell you the true story, Billy, but David won't like it. He likes good sports." A note of quiet bitterness deepened Mary's voice.

David moved uneasily. He was right, he had not impressed Mary. He turned to Billy.

"Come on, kid, time to leave for Queen's

Club. You can unpack when we get back. Ready, Mary?"

She put down her book.

"Yes, I'm ready," she said.

Billy almost forgave David his loss in France when he saw the magnificent tennis his brother played to win the London Championships. Arline and Mr. Harker, who had returned a week previous, seemed as thrilled as Billy, and in their combined praise to David and their boisterous welcome to Billy Mary was almost ignored. Somehow Mary was so easy to ignore, not through desire but because one almost forgot her presence. It was not until that night when he and Mary had gone to their room that David suddenly realized that Mary had been strangely quiet all through the evening. She had not even congratulated him.

"Aren't you glad I won?" he asked quizzically.

"Yes, of course, David."

"You didn't even congratulate me," he said, gently.

"It seemed unnecessary," she smiled. "So many others were doing it."

"You know yours count most. Didn't you think I played well?"

"Splendidly!" she said enthusiastically.

"Why didn't you tell me?" he asked.

"Well, everyone was telling you, especially," she paused momentarily then hurried on, "especially Arline. She told you often and I thought too loudly. You would not have heard me."

"I always hear you, dear." He took her hand.

"Yes, if I'm wrong," she said bitterly, then rather defiantly: "Somehow too hearty congratulations don't seem like good sportsmanship to me."

He glanced sharply at her.

Her eyes stole away from his and he turned away.

"It seems more like gloating." A little laugh, brittle in its quality, cut the pause, then: "Well, maybe I'll learn some day. You know, I'm not a sportswoman." She walked to him and kissed him quietly. "Good-night, David. I'm proud to be the wife of the champion of London."

He caught her hand.

"Mary!"

She disengaged her fingers and kissed him again.

"Good-night, dear," she said, as she turned toward her bed.

CHAPTER XIV

WIMBLEDON!

Only those who have been there can begin to know for what that stands in England. Wimbledon! The climax of the sporting season, the acme of the social alliance with sport, an event that is equalled only by Ascot and Henley.

Wimbledon!

Here one finds the great and humble, rich and poor, aristocrat and commoner shoulder to shoulder, held by that greatest of games—tennis!

Wimbledon!

Here is the last word in tennis clubs and their equipment, here is efficiency in tournament management raised to its highest point, here is public interest sustained at the boiling

point, and finally here is tennis, in skill, tradition, and ethics, raised to a point beyond anything known elsewhere in the world.

Mary, David, and Billy never forgot their first Wimbledon. To David as champion of the United States was accorded the honor of the centre court on the first day. He played the second match, following Henri Cochet, the defending champion who opened the tournament. Mary, David, and Billy arrived about one-thirty. Major Larcombe, the honorable secretary of the club, had held seats for the Harkers and Coopers in the first row of the great centre court stand directly across from the royal box. Even on the first day, the enormous stadium was well filled. David stopped off in the dressing room but Mary and Billy went directly to their seats. What a thrill went through them at their first sight of the famous centre court! Stretched before their eyes was the most perfect bit of green velvet turf known to man. The white lines of the court gleamed brilliantly in the sun. Just as they took their seats, Cochet flashed a brilliant volley past his opponent and a mighty voice swept the arena:

"Game and First Set Cochet 6—3."

It was the man in the chair announcing through the loud-speakers hidden far above them in the stand. Mary's eyes swept the stand. Fully ten thousand people sat silent watching the play of the little French genius on the court. None paid much attention to his opponent. Few bothered to find out who he was. He was only Cochet's first victim. What difference did it make? This gallery was there to see the flawless art of the great French star.

A burst of applause greeted a brilliant passing shot by Cochet, polite silence met a double fault by his opponent. Mary was impressed by the attitude of the public; Billy was thrilled. These people knew tennis. They were connoisseurs of the game. They were not the unruly unknowing baseball fans who came out to see tennis at Forest Hills. This was an intelligent sporting public versed in the fine points of the game. Mary was delighted. They were to see David, her David, the greatest player in the world. They would appreciate him. For the first time since she married David she felt a keen personal desire in how he played. Usually

she merely wanted him to win. Now she not only wanted him to win but to play well. She drew a long breath and looked at Billy. The boy's eyes were shining.

"Gee, isn't it swell!" he breathed. "Gosh, how I'd love to play here!"

David was dressing. For the first time in months he was nervous. Not since he had won the championship of the United States had he felt the same tension before a match. There had been no sign of it in France. Why was he such a fool? He hadn't anyone to play. His opponent was some old duffer who was at his best before David was born. He had to stop being such a fool. There was no chance of his losing! No, it wasn't that! It wasn't a question of winning or losing. It was something more than that. He was standing on the threshold of the goal of every tennis player's career, the Wimbledon centre court. The real truth of the matter was that he was scared to death that he would not play well, that he would not live up to the standard of the place.

A howl of excitement, evidently over a sensational shot, then a long-sustained burst of applause announced the end of the Cochet

match. David pulled on his sweater and picked up his racquets. Cochet came briskly in through the door.

"Ah, hello Cooper. Good luck," he said. "The court is very good but fast."

A hand touched David. It was Mr. Burrows, the referee; with him was Mr. Story, his assistant.

"We are ready if you are, Mr. Cooper. Your opponent is outside."

David felt his heart jump and then race ahead.

"I'm ready," he said quietly.

Almost in a daze he walked out of the room, shook hands with someone—he supposed it was his opponent, he wasn't sure—but it made no difference, and in a moment more he felt the grass of the centre court below his feet.

A roar of applause greeted him. The immensity of the stadium, the size of the crowd, the echo from the stand, the murmuring roar of the public's voice bore down on him, crushing him with their weight. He felt desperate. He couldn't play tennis here. All he wanted to do was to get out.

"What is the racquet?" the voice of his opponent came dimly to his ear.

"Rough," he said automatically.

"It is!"

"I'll serve."

Someone, a ball boy he guessed, shoved some balls in his hand. He looked desperately around for some way of escape, his eyes sweeping the crowded stand. Suddenly through the mist that seemed to be closing around him, two faces came clearly before his vision. They were smiling at him. They were Billy and Mary. His mind cleared. Billy and Mary! He couldn't throw them down now. He walked out on the court and automatically hit a ball to his opponent for practice. The sharp ping of the ball on his racquet brought a pleasurable sense of familiarity. His opponent drove it back. True and clean it came off the turf waist high, crying to be hit. He drove it with all his strength, fast and deep into the corner. A low murmur of delight at the shot swept the gallery. David suddenly wanted to play tennis, play it as never before. He was on the centre court at Wimbledon. If he couldn't play there, he couldn't play anywhere. Again he drove furi-

ously and again his stroke was true. What a court! What a place to play tennis! He was ready! Let them start.

The umpire looked at him. His opponent was standing in position to receive.

"Ready, Mr. Cooper?"

David smiled at him.

"I'll tell the world!" he said eagerly.

The umpire turned to the microphone.

"Play," he announced.

CHAPTER XV

THE tennis David played in that match surpassed any he had ever shown before. It was sensational, crushing, devastating in its severity, yet sound, certain, almost flawless in its defense. He was the sensation of Wimbledon. The British, always quick to recognize and acclaim greatness, rose to him as a man and cheered him to the echo as he left the court. Even Mary and Billy were completely satisfied with his play. Arline and Mr. Harker, who had arrived before the end of the first set, were carried away with enthusiasm. They called upon all and sundry to witness that such tennis had never been seen, remarking in passing that it had been played by the American champion and incidentally, as Mr. Harker told a friend quite loudly, a member of Mr.

Harker's own company and his close personal friend.

The English press was unanimous in its praise. Mr. Wallis Mayers, leading tennis critic of England, wrote that "Cooper combined the crushing service of McLoughlin with the drive of Johnston, the volley of Borotra, the defense of Lacoste and the genius of strategy of Cochet." After that there was little to say, but what was left the other writers said. In one day David established himself as Cochet's most dangerous rival.

David himself was delighted but not surprised at his game. Once he had come out of the daze that hit him on his entrance to the centre court he knew he would play his best tennis in that court, better tennis than he had ever dreamed of playing in the United States. He knew that this first match was no flash in the pan. He could reproduce this form any day at Wimbledon. The one thing he wanted was to play; anxiously he waited for each day. He was like a hound straining at a leash, eager to be away after his prey. On through the two long weeks required to finish the tournament, undismayed by rain that held

sway for two days, undiscouraged by the defeats of other Americans, calm, quiet, but eager, David stormed his relentless triumphant way to the finals. In his wake were the defeated Boussus, De Morpurgo, Austin, Borotra, and once more Hunter. Only Hunter won a set and that after David led at 5—3, and 40—15 in the third, when a typical Hunter rally carried the great American veteran through four games to win at 7—5.

Cochet had had more trouble on his side than David on his. Lacoste's absence, which had removed a great threat from the American's half, had thrown Borotra, Cochet's most dangerous foe, on the other side from the defending champion. However, although Cochet dropped sets to men in the first three rounds, by the time he reached Lott, Hennessey, and Kehrling he was at his best, sweeping away all opposition without the loss of a set.

One afternoon early in the second week of Wimbledon, Arline and David were on their way back to the club house from Court One from their decisive but expected defeat in the mixed doubles at the hands of Cochet and

Eileen Bennett, when they were hailed in familiar tones.

"Oh, Arline! Mr. Cooper!"

It was Miss Fanny Pratt and the Honorable Egbert. They had not seen them since the evening in Paris when they had met at Les Ambassadeurs.

Fanny rushed up, Egbert in tow.

"Oh, Arline, the most terrible thing's happened," she cried just as Egbert announced:

"I say, old things, we're married."

"I'm so sorry," cried Arline.

"Congratulations!" said David in unison.

"Why, Mr. Cooper?" said Fanny in distress.

"I beg your pardon, Arline," said the Honorable Eggie in pained surprise.

"Oh, I wasn't speaking to you," said Arline and David in chorus, then Arline turned to Fanny directly. "What's happened, Fanny? What's so terrible?"

"Oh, they wouldn't let us be married on the centre court. That nasty old secretary said he wouldn't even consider it. He said he couldn't have so many people wearing heels on the turf. I told him we'd all wear rubber-soled shoes

and tennis clothes if necessary, but he wouldn't even discuss it."

"So I just bundled her off to St. Margaret's and married her," said Eggie calmly.

Arline grabbed Fanny and kissed her.

"That's wonderful," she cried.

David grasped Eggie's hand.

"Splendid! Congratulations!"

Fanny smiled happily. "Oh, and Egbert says we'll coach all winter with Kozeluh on the Riviera and by next year we'll be good enough to get into Wimbledon. I'll show that secretary person I can get on his old centre court yet. Well, bye-bye," and off she sailed, the Honorable Egbert in tow.

David looked at Arline and laughed. "I'll bet she will too," he said.

She grinned back at him.

"Well, if she doesn't, I'll bet she has a daughter who does. Come, hurry, let's dress and get away."

The Cochet—Cooper final was scheduled for the last day of the championships. Already Helen Wills had successfully defended her title, beating Betty Nuthall in two brilliantly played close sets that showed how great a

player the little English girl really was, for Miss Wills was at her best. The defending champions, Allison and Van Ryn of the United States, had been unable to play that year. The doubles final found France against the United States, and this time France won when Borotra and Brugnon nosed out Lott and Hennessey in four magnificent sets, settled by the terrific smashing of Borotra, who crashed the lobbing attack of the Americans with his merciless severity.

The crowd for the final was unprecedented. Every seat was taken. The line for unreserved seats and standing room formed early the night before. Never had excitement run so high. The press admitted that the match was an even bet. Even the French team recognized that, in Cooper, Cochet faced a player, who might well overcome even the genius of the world champion. The title of world champion itself hung on the match, with only Lacoste to dispute it with the winner. Half an hour before the match more than twenty thousand persons were jammed around the court; thousands more had been turned away and the gates locked.

David, Mary, and Billy lunched alone in their sitting room at the Savoy. Even the Harkers were not present. Arline knew too much about tennis to intrude and succeeded in side-tracking her father from his avowed intention of "giving David some valuable advice on how to play Cochet." She insisted that he take her to lunch at the Ritz and wait until he reached Wimbledon to see David, mentally vowing not to let him get to Wimbledon until the match was started. She felt David had enough on his hands with Mary.

The Coopers drove up to the stadium, the focus of all eyes. Up through the great throng that crowded around the door to the dressing rooms David was cheered wildly as he stepped out of the big Daimler and assisted Mary to alight. Billy jumped out, his eyes gleaming.

"Gosh Dave, listen to that. Gee, it's swell."

Mary shyly stepped inside out of sight.

David smiled his thanks to the crowd, turned and followed Mary, Billy at his heels.

"Mary, I think you and Billy had better get your seats now. I'm going to dress."

She turned to him.

"Yes, David," she said quietly. "Come Billy!"

Billy grabbed Dave's hand and pounded him a mighty wallop on the back.

"Go to it, Dave! Clean up! You gotta win! I know you will!"

"Thanks, kid, I'll try."

He walked with them to the door.

Mary suddenly threw her arms around his neck and kissed him.

"Good luck!" she whispered.

A cheer rent the silence. Mary turned in confusion. They were standing in the door, directly in front of the crowd. She blushed and grabbed Billy's hand.

"Come on, Billy. Hurry!" and shielding her face from the eyes of the curious, she hurried the boy along to the entrance to their seats.

David turned back to the dressing room, smiling. The little episode had lifted the terrible tension of the hours before. Good old Mary, how this would embarrass her. Still a few more things like that and maybe it would make her less sensitive. He laughed a little. It was good for her. Well, he'd better dress.

"Ellis!" he called sharply as he pulled off his coat.

★ ★ ★

"Final Round. Men's singles. Henri Cochet of France, defending champion, versus David Cooper, of the United States. Play!" The umpire's voice over the loud-speaker rose above the conversation of the enormous gallery that packed every inch of the great stadium. A diminishing roar sank into a rustling whisper, then silence, deep, tense, almost tangible in its profound quietness, settled over the centre court. Cochet stood in position to receive just inside the baseline. David tossed the ball in the air for the opening service.

The great match was on!

It was a match that will live in tennis history!

David opened with an attack that surpassed anything he had shown all through the tournament. Even the stone wall defense and tactical genius of Cochet was powerless before such speed and accuracy. Like a raging tiger David pounded the ball into the corners of Cochet's court, following to the net to cut off Cochet's

defensive returns with unplayable volleys. It was super-tennis! The only thing that anyone, even Cochet, could do was to bow before the storm of placements and wait for the lull that was sure to come. No human being could play at that pace long. His terrific start carried David through the first set with the loss of but one game. After he had dropped the first four games Cochet was content to run David as far as possible and let the set go with as little effort on his own part as necessary.

Mary was in ecstasy at the end of the set. She believed the match was over and announced it definitely, adding:

"Poor Cochet! It is a pity he could not give David a better game."

Arline leaned across and said quietly:

"Don't worry about poor Cochet yet. Let's be glad David has a set before Cochet starts."

"Oh, don't be foolish, Arline," Mary cried loudly. "It's all David. Cochet hasn't a chance."

Billy looked at her earnestly.

"Gee! I hope not, Mary, but Arline ought to know."

"Well, she doesn't; at least not this time,"

Mary laughed. "David will win in straight sets."

It seemed as if Mary might be right when David crashed through Cochet's service and held his own to lead at 2—0, and 3—1 in the second set. David was absolutely lost to the world. All he knew was that tennis ball and his desire to hit it. The cheers of the crowd, the fact he was playing super-tennis, the presence of Mary and Billy, the call of the umpire, all were lost in his intense concentration on hitting that ball. Even Cochet was lost sight of. It never entered his mind it was the world's champion he was dethroning. The match was just one more in his string, another chance to hit that ball. Suddenly something happened. An electric current seemed to run through the crowd. "The King and Queen are coming!" The rumor ran like wildfire over the stand. Interest, previously centred on the match, was shifted to the stairs to the royal box. The King and Queen were coming. Out on the court a spirit of unrest entered the consciousness of the players although neither knew what it was. David felt it without actually realizing it.

Suddenly at the head of the steps leading into the royal box appeared two figures, a stately lady clad in soft gray, by her side a small bearded gentleman in dark clothes and a black derby hat. Instantly that great crowd rose to its feet, cheering. Play ceased on the court. Murmurs, distinctly heard, "Their Majesties" and "The King and Queen," reached David where he stood slightly dazed by the sudden stoppage of play. The King and Queen! What was he supposed to do? He glanced quickly at Cochet. The champion was standing at attention facing the royal box. David instinctively did the same. It was evidently the correct thing to do. How long would he have to stand so? he wondered. The crowd had burst into thunders of applause. The King seated the Queen, and turning acknowledged the hearty welcome of his people. He glanced at the court and graciously included the waiting players in his greetings. Then he took his seat at the Queen's side and the cheering crowd followed his example and took their places.

David stood like one turned to stone. The King and Queen of England! He was going to

play before them. What an honor! What a tribute to the game of tennis.

"Play!"

The umpire's voice cut through his thoughts, rousing him to the realization that Cochet was waiting to serve, had been waiting for some time. He tried to bring his mind back to the game. He walked into position to receive.

"All right. I'm ready," he called.

Somehow everything was different now. He could hear and see the crowd. He remembered it was the final round at Wimbledon. This was Cochet, the world's champion, he was playing. Yes, he was playing Cochet and before the King and Queen of England.

He netted Cochet's easy service.

"15—love."

Playing Cochet before the King and Queen of England. It was a great honor. His drive went out by three feet.

"30—love."

There was something wrong. He shouldn't miss shots like that before all this crowd—and the King and Queen.

Once more he netted his service return.

"40—love."

This must not go on. He must play well. He must make good clean hard drives. He swung furiously at the ball as it rose in front of him. Once more the tape cut it down.

"Game! Cochet—3 games to 2. Cooper leads, second set, having won the first set."

Even in the stands it was apparent that something had happened to David. His whole attitude showed it. Mary could see it without knowing the cause.

"Oh, Billy, is he ill?" she whispered.

"No, he's all right. Just fussed," said Billy bravely.

It was true David was fussed, worse than that he was rattled. Nothing he attempted would come off. He couldn't get his mind back on the game. Somehow all he could see were those two figures in the royal box. He wanted desperately to play well before them, and the more he thought of it, the worse he grew. Cochet was quick to sense the change in David and to recognize its cause. Like the great champion he was he jumped at his chance. Instead of the defensive style he had played in the first set, he sprang into the attack, hurrying David at every possible opportunity.

Game after game he rushed through, aided by a deluge of errors from the American. He took the second set at 6—3 and jumped into a lead of 4—1 and 5—2 in the third.

David's mind was gradually clearing. Slowly his thoughts came back to the match. He forgot the King and Queen in the royal box. He realized at last he stood on the threshold of defeat in a match that he had held in his hands. If he lost he had only himself to blame.

Patiently he settled down to wrest the attack from Cochet, a difficult feat now the champion was in command. Slowly but surely he pounded back the great French star. From 5—2 to 5—3 and then to 5—4 with his own service to tie the score, he battled. Four terrifically fought points were divided for 30—all, when Cochet unleashed a miraculous passing shot off his back-hand as David came to the net, a placement that landed cleanly inside the sideline.

"30—40!"

Set point!

David served. Cochet drove to David's back-hand. The American took the ball with a sweeping swing and punched it deep into the

Frenchman's forehand corner, closing in to the net behind the shot. Cochet, chasing hard after the ball, reached it and hit it back blindly, down the centre of the court. David was standing directly in front of the ball, a certain volley in his hands. The set was safe for a moment. He stepped forward to meet the ball. Cochet was on his knees out of court. The ball reached the net and David's racquet came forward for the easy volley. The ball dipped slightly, tipped the net cord—and with a slight rise, hopped clear over the waiting racquet to fall in court two feet behind the American. A deep groan, then a sharp yell arose from the crowd! David stood rooted to the spot. God, what a break!

Cochet rose from his knees.

"I'm sorry," he said sincerely. "Very lucky."

"Game and third set, Cochet," cried the umpire and with the words sounded the doom of the challenger in the minds of the majority. One does not lose such a set and win tennis matches! Most players would wilt completely in the face of such a break.

David Cooper was not "most players."

Instead of wilting, it angered him and stirred him profoundly. Gone was all thought of the King and Queen. Gone was all fear of Cochet, or thought of the importance of the match. He'd be damned if he'd be licked by a rotten break of luck like that. He'd win this match if it was the last thing he ever did. Just give him a crack at that tennis ball. He would hit it so it never would come back. Once more his whole being centred on the ball and his desire to hit it.

Cochet must have thought a cyclone was let loose with the start of the fourth set. If David had hit hard before, he slogged the ball now. Everything came off. No matter what risk he took, and he took them all, he got away with it. Only a champion like Cochet at his best could have annexed three games in that set. The score was tied at two sets all. It was anybody's match now.

David was tired! Even his iron frame felt the strain of such exertions as he had put forth in that fourth set. Cochet was calm, cool, and collected. He fully expected to win.

Up in the stands Mary was almost fainting from the strain. Billy was clutching her hand

with one of his while with the other he was hanging on to Arline. Even Mr. Harker was bathed in perspiration from excitement.

"Oh, God," murmured Mary, "please help him win."

Arline looked over and smiled. "I'm afraid he must do that for himself," she said quietly.

What a set that last one turned out to be!

Games alternated with service to 6—all with both men close to the break several times. Once at 3—4 David led 15—40 on Cochet, only to have the champion save the match with two sensational volleys that seemed impossible. David himself was 30—40 down at 5—all, but a brilliant service ace brought deuce and in a moment it was his game.

In the thirteenth game came the incident that will remain tennis history. David led at 40—30. He reached the net when a shot of Cochet's seemed likely to fall very close to the net cord. The American stepped in and cut it off, sharply angled for a clear point. As he did so his trouser leg grazed the net.

"Game! Cooper," cried the umpire.

David still stood by the net.

"My trouser leg touched the net," he said clearly.

The umpire looked at him.

"Are you sure?" he said. "I didn't see it."

"Quite sure."

The umpire turned to the microphone.

"Mr. Cooper touched the net. Mr. Cochet's point. The score is deuce."

David walked back to the baseline amid an ovation that shook the stand. He was cheered to the echo.

"What a sportsman!" Everywhere the cry went up.

Cochet, himself one of the greatest sportsmen known to the game, ran to the net.

"Thank you, Cooper," he called.

David smiled wearily. He felt old and tired. What did the match matter, after such a moment? He served, and the match was on again. A moment more and the score was called.

"Game, Mr. Cochet. He leads 7—6. Final set."

It was the end! It was all over! All Cochet needed was to win his service and he was again

champion. David walked despairingly into position, as a silence like death settled over the court. Suddenly a girl's voice rang out from the stand:

"David, you must win!"

It was Mary. God! He'd forgotten her. He must win, win for her! He must win to prove to her that victory and good sportsmanship go hand in hand. A flood of determination swept away the lassitude that had settled on his weary frame. He rose on his toes, eager once more.

There is little to tell of those last three games. David went crazy. In less than five minutes, he ran out three games and the match and with it the championship in a burst of tennis that surpassed anything in his whole career. He left the court in a daze, the cheers of the multitude ringing in his ears less distinctly than the sincere congratulations of Cochet. In the hallway of the club, once he had escaped the press photographers on the court, he found his family waiting. Arline rushed up and kissed him.

"Wonderful!" she cried.

Mr. Harker wrung his hand furiously.

"I knew we'd do it, boy," he said. "I'm proud of you."

A terrific thump on the back heralded Billy's arrival.

"Attaboy, Dave. Gee, that's great! swell! hot puppy!"

Just behind Billy came Mary, her eyes shining. David stepped eagerly toward her.

"Mary——" he said, and just then a voice sounded in his ear:

"His Majesty, the King, desires your presence in the royal box."

David turned incredulously.

"The King! Gee!" then, "Just a minute until I kiss my wife," said the new champion, and after fully carrying out his intention he entered the royal box to meet their Majesties.

CHAPTER XVI

David's victory at Wimbledon was the climax of the tennis season to Mary and him. Even his victories over Cochet and Lacoste and the Davis Cup did not mean to them what his Wimbledon triumph did. It is possible that the fact that the United States lost the cup, three matches to two, marred their pleasure in his personal victories, but it is certain that not again all the year did they feel the same thrill in any match. Even his second successive victory in the American Championship did not approach it. In fact the Harkers and Mary, Billy and David took this latter as a matter of course, particularly since none of the French stars was in the tournament.

The remainder of their European trip, following Wimbledon, passed without incident. David was busy with his training for the

Davis Cup challenge round which was to be played at the Stade Roland Garros in Paris. They were living at the Pavillon Henri IV at St.-Germain-en-Laye, so that Paris night life was not only without great attraction but also rather inaccessible. Mary loved it at St.-Germain. It was quiet, cool, and simple. The glorious view looking over the river toward Paris, with the city itself, crowned by the Church of the Sacré Cœur, gleaming in the afternoon sun like a dream city floating on clouds, thrilled her with its romance and its peace. In the evening, when darkness fell, the lights of the city reminded her of the third act of Charpentier's opera, *Louise*, which she had heard at the Opéra-Comique during her first visit to Paris for the French Championships. She could almost hear Mary Garden singing "Depuis le Jour" every time she sat at her window and watched those distant flickering lights. Arline spent many evenings in Paris with her various friends, but Mary always begged off from these parties on the plea that she hated to leave David, who could not go out at night until after the matches were over. Mary would hardly admit it to herself but she

had a strong curiosity to see a bit of Paris night life before she went home. She dropped a hint of this one day in front of David and Billy, with the result that Billy was so enthusiastic about the scheme that before he stopped David and Arline had promised an all-night excursion through the dives of Montmartre before sailing for home.

The night of the last day's play for the Davis Cup was selected for the excursion, on the ground that if America won they should celebrate, and if America lost it would be the time to drown their sorrows.

Afterward both Mary and David regretted that evening. They started with a dinner at Les Ambassadeurs, at which Arline, Mary, Fanny Pratt, and two other girls were escorted by a variegated male contingent consisting of Mr. Harker, David, the Honorable Egbert, Billy, and three other men, none of whom David had ever seen before, or, after that night, would know again.

By the time the party left Les Ambassadeurs most of the men, with the exception of Billy, were just a bit squiffy, not seriously drunk but decidedly happy. Mary had her hands full

keeping close to David and out of the reach of one of the other men who seemed to find her a most delightful companion. Arline, who had drunk more than usual, was inclined to be noisy and insisted on David acting as her special escort, which annoyed Mary exceedingly. She sought refuge with Billy. By one o'clock she was quite ready to go home to bed. She was cross and sleepy. David, who was off the water wagon for the first time on the trip, was at his friendliest. He met all and sundry who came his way with great enthusiasm, whether he knew them or not. He drank copiously of any and all wine he found, with the result that he was definitely drunk. By three o'clock in the morning, when they were sitting in a queer little café in Montmartre, a motley crowd of American tourists and real French types crowding the stuffy little room around them, David's good humor had flown with his increasing intoxication. He was in a nasty mood. Mary suggested it was time to go home.

"Ah, cut it out, Mary, why be a kill-joy?" said David with grave dignity and decidedly thick speech, setting down his glass of champagne, "the evening's only started." He

turned to the big colored man who was leading the orchestra. "Hey, you, come on, give us s'more music."

Billy leaned across and picked up his brother's glass. The boy had been an interested spectator only that evening.

David turned back just as Billy took a drink and set back the glass. Mary, turning back from speaking to her dinner partner, caught the incident out of the corner of her eye.

"Billy!" Consternation rang in her voice.

"Hey, kid, cut that out," David shouted at him.

Billy looked quizzically at his brother. "Why?" he asked innocently.

"Just 'cause," said David thickly, swaying to his feet.

"That's no reason," said Billy, laughing. He picked up the glass again, and raised it to his lips.

"All right! Then here's a better one," snarled David and struck the glass from the boy's hand. It shattered on the floor.

"David, please," Mary's voice shook.

"Now, you stay out of this," he said harshly.

Mary jumped up.

"Come on, Billy. I'm going home. Come on, David!"

"I won't. Don't be a damn' fool, Mary. It's early!"

"No, I'm going, David, and so is Billy. Are you coming?"

"No, why should I? I want to dance. Haven't been on a party in a dog's age. Can't you be a sport just once?" His voice rose high over the din of the dishes. People in the café stared at their table.

Mary gathered her wrap around her and took Billy's hand.

"Come, Billy, we'll go home in a taxi," she said and started for the door.

Arline rose and came to her.

"Take the car, Mary," she said. "We'll come home in a taxi."

"Thank you, Arline," Mary smiled wanly. "Coming with us, David?"

"Let him stay," Arline whispered. "It will only make a scene if you insist. We'll get him home. Don't worry. You get Billy out of here."

"You're right, Arline. Thanks. Come along, Billy."

Mary and the boy went out to the waiting car.

They stepped in, Mary softly crying. Suddenly she made as if to turn back.

"Oh, what's the use?" she murmured.

Billy snuggled up to her.

"Don't worry, Mary. Dave'll be all right with Arline."

He felt Mary stiffen beside him. Her voice was cold when she spoke.

"Yes, I guess he will! Oh, Billy, why did you touch that champagne?"

"Why shouldn't I? All I did all evening was just sit and look. Thought I'd have some fun."

"Oh, Billy, you mustn't touch liquor. Oh, don't you see what it does? Look what it does to David."

"Aw, gee, Mary, cut it out. I wasn't gonna get cockeyed. I was just fooling."

"Oh, but you must not drink, Billy, you mustn't." Mary's tears burst out afresh.

"Aw, I'm not gonna drink. Don't cry, Mary. Gosh, this is a hell of a way to end a big evening," and Billy put his arms around Mary's neck and, pulling her face down to his, kissed her.

CHAPTER XVII

David reached the Pavillon Henri IV at five-thirty in the morning, dead drunk. It required the assistance of Mr. Harker and the night porter to get him to his room and to bed, from which only the extreme necessity of completing the arrangements to sail for home the following day finally dragged him. Mary made the grave error of attempting to talk seriously to him about his behavior the previous night during his painful combination of packing and a splitting headache. All she succeeded in doing was to confirm David's opinion that she had acted very badly toward him the previous night and that he was more sinned against than sinning.

The party sailed for home on the *Olympic* with diplomatic relations slightly strained in the Cooper family. This condition was not materially improved by the trip. In the first

place it was a rather rough crossing. Mary succumbed the first day and took refuge in bed, from which she did not emerge for two days. By the time she appeared on deck, Billy and David, neither of whom had suffered from the pitching and tossing of the vessel, had many claims on their time. Billy had found a couple of school chums on board, and the boys rapidly made the acquaintance of all the young girls aboard, so Billy's every minute was filled with deck tennis, shuffle-board, horse races, and, in the evenings, dancing and a few explorations of the dark decks. He was in no serious mischief but was far too busy to do more than greet Mary casually in transit. David, with Arline, had met all the sporting element on the boat. Most of his time was spent in the smoking room, playing contract bridge or swopping stories. Since the group he was with included several musical comedy stars, three or four millionaire sportsmen, and a prominent opera singer whose love affairs made her more famous than her voice ever could, the stakes were high and the stories racy. It was no atmosphere for Mary. David recognized that even before she emerged

from her retirement. He found Arline at her best in this setting. In fact, it struck him that Arline played the best bridge and he knew she told the best stories. David had intended to climb back on the water wagon after that last night in Paris. Unfortunately someone told him the first day out, when the boat began to toss around and David's head and stomach reeled in unison, that champagne was a sure cure. He immediately tried it and found it most effective. It was not only effective but pleasurable, so, once cured, he did not stop but continued it, on the grounds that an ounce of preventive is worth a pound of cure. In his case he substituted quarts for ounces.

Mary emerged on the third day, after a heroic battle with herself in her stateroom in which she finally found courage to face the world. She appeared in the smoke lounge, pale, wan, slightly green, and in no mood for hilarity. She reached the door as Arline's voice rang out in what was evidently the end of a limerick:

"'You're right,' said the plumber, 'it's me!'"

A howl of laughter, above it all David's,

greeted the close of the story. Mary came forward to find herself facing a group of about ten. She heard Arline whisper quickly to David, "My God, Dave, do you think she heard all that?" and his quick "No, don't worry," in reply. David rose and came toward her, pulling up a chair for her on the way.

"Hello, dear, feeling better?"

"Yes, David!"

He turned to the others.

"My wife," he announced. "Mary, I want you to know Miss Gladys Arnold of the *Follies*, Miss Elsie Starr of *Cut That Out*, Madame Alvira Rangova of the Opera, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Barker, Mr. Ellis, Mr. Black, and another Mr. Black."

Mary acknowledged the introductions and sat down. She felt slightly ill.

"Oh, Miss Harker, do tell us that story you started a while ago. You know, the one about the big coon who was up on the charge of——"

"Not now," Arline cut in quickly. "I'm sorry I must go—I have a letter to write."

David rose to his feet.

"Oh, Arline, what's the rush? Wait awhile." He turned to his wife. "Come on, Mary, let's

go on deck. You look as if you need a bit of fresh air, and so do I." He swayed a little. "I have played too much bridge to-day."

Mary looked sharply at him and caught the flash of his glance to Arline and her smile in return. She rose quietly to her feet. So they didn't want her there, even David. This was just an excuse to get her away. She found herself wondering what the story was and what charge was against the coon.

"That's a good idea, David," she heard herself saying. "Come on."

He walked toward her a trifle unsteadily. For a moment she thought it was due to the roll of the boat until she realized that she was quite steady on her feet. David had been drinking again. It was certainly time she was up and about. Goodness only knows what he had done in her absence.

"I'll see you at dinner, Arline," she smiled, and with David at her side she walked to the door.

Behind her she heard the whispered query: "His wife! What's she like?"

Arline's reply in a guarded undertone just reached her:

"Oh, all right. Nice, but an awful prig. That's why I didn't tell the story. It goes this way . . ." and the rest was lost as Arline lowered her voice still more. Another roar of laughter behind them followed them on the deck.

Despite Mary's best efforts to police both Billy and David she had uneasy moments with both. Twice she found Billy in what she considered entirely too close proximity to a girl, when she happened to walk around the deck for a breath of air before going to bed. She almost decided she should speak to David about it, but something told her it was a matter which she herself must handle. Billy gave her no opportunity to talk quietly alone to him, and the voyage ended with Mary still in a quandary about what to do. David was quite another problem. He would play contract in the smoking room. If he did, he drank champagne while he played. He drank much less when she was watching, yet she couldn't watch all the time. She grew terribly bored and, to make it worse, the smoke and heat of the smoking room made her feel very ill. She knew Arline was always with him, playing as

his partner. Arline seemed to encourage him to drink. Mary thought it was because Arline knew it worried her.

David himself was having far too good a time to give anything much thought. He was returning home undisputed champion of the world. His victories over Cochet and Lacoste in the Davis Cup, following his triumph at Wimbledon, gave him a clear claim to be called the greatest player in the world. He was basking in the warmth of public affection and glorying in the congratulations that were showered upon him. He had done his job and done it well, and for the moment it was over and he was free to have fun. Time enough for more serious training, serious tennis, and serious business when he reached home. On this voyage he was going to have a good time. Arline fostered this feeling in him by flattering him, playing him up to the ship as the returning hero, and telling him that after the strain of the weeks of competition abroad a complete change was the best thing in the world for him.

David had no intention of hurting Mary or even worrying her. He certainly had no inten-

tion of neglecting Billy. He had no idea he was doing either. He simply followed his inclinations, most natural ones after the strain he had been under. He found that Arline exactly suited his mood. She understood his thoughts, his wishes, and agreed with them. Mary didn't and made no effort to do so. He simply, thoughtlessly sought for the moment the company that gave him the relaxation he wished and the light carefree amusement he desired.

The *Olympic* docked with Mary almost at the breaking-point, Billy a little out of hand and David slightly drunk. They parted from the Harkers at the dock, with no regrets on Mary's part. All she wanted was to get back to her home and be quiet. She would soon straighten out Master Billy and bring David off his high horse, she told herself. After all, they were nothing but a couple of spoiled kids. She wouldn't let them annoy her. Much of her hurt and anger melted in her joy at coming home.

The excitement of opening the apartment, the work of house-cleaning for Mary, and the return to the office, even for a few days, for

David gave Mary no chance to speak seriously to either Billy or David on certain matters pertaining to the voyage. The unpleasantness passed from her mind in the fun of retelling to their friends all their adventures. David and Billy were going away again almost at once. Billy was going West to play the National Junior Championship, accompanied by and under the careful training of David, after which David was bound for Newport to the invitation tournament under the equally careful training of Billy. Mary decided to stay at home so as to have the apartment ready for their return for the National Singles, immediately following which Billy would leave for his second year at St. Bernard's, a matter that would require new clothes, and much thought on them by Mary.

Billy won the National Junior Championship without the loss of a set. The practice which he had acquired in Paris with David and also with Kozeluh and others of the leading professionals had put the finishing touch to the boy's game and he came back to the United States a really great player. All the critics admitted he was the finest youngster

of his age in the world, comparable to Junior Coen at sixteen, and seemingly destined to follow in the footsteps of his brother as world's champion. It was David's personal opinion that Billy would be far greater than he himself would ever be.

David's own triumphs at Newport and in the National Singles were so easy, and so definitely the logical outcome of the tournaments, that they caused little comment in the press, or for that matter in the Cooper family. They were taken as a matter of course. The day following David's victory in the National Championship Mr. Harker sent word he wished to see him at the office.

Mr. Harker received David in his private room.

"Sit down, Mr. Champion, sit down." Mr. Harker waved him to a chair and offered him a cigar.

David accepted it and took a seat.

"You wished to see me, sir?" he asked.

"Nothing special, David. I just wanted to tell you I'm proud of you."

"Thank you, sir."

"It's just a year since you came to us."

"Yes, a year to-night since you offered me this position!"

Mr. Harker smiled serenely.

"Yes, just a year. A fine year, David, a fine year. We certainly have done this thing right."

"It's been a wonderful year for me," said David sincerely.

"I hope it's been a happy one for you and your wife and brother. He is a fine boy, David, a fine boy. Great win of his at the Junior Championship. He'll be national champion some day, years from now when you feel like quitting. There will be a position waiting for him here then." Mr. Harker radiated friendship in his smile.

"That's wonderful of you, Mr. Harker, to think of that kid. He will be a great player, better than I ever will."

"No, hardly that, David, but very great. Well, son, get along to your work. Just wanted to tell you how proud of you I am and, David—your regular salary is twelve thousand a year."

David sprang forward and grasped Mr. Harker's hand.

"Gee, that's great of you, Mr. Harker. Thanks."

Mr. Harker waved him off airily.

"And your commissions, of course, go on just the same. Now run along."

David left the office treading on air. The old man had been pleased with his work. He had made good himself, without any help. He had received a raise of two thousand dollars a year because he had made good. Wait until Mary heard this!

He almost burst with excitement before he could get away from the office to tell her. In his enthusiasm he compiled all he had earned that year, salary and commissions. He was delighted to find out he had made $14,700, $4,700 above his regular salary. He also asked and received his expense account which he had drawn against this during the year, but receiving it just as he left the office he stuffed it in his pocket without really paying much attention to it. He knew he had spent a good deal of money in Europe. More than he intended. He remembered cabling for additional funds twice during the trip. However, time enough to see the bad news after he had told Mary the glad tidings of his talk with Mr. Harker.

He grabbed his hat and dashed for the subway.

Mr. Harker had reason to be pleased with the year of David Cooper's connection with his company. Not only had David himself done quite well for a new man, but the tremendous advertising value of his unique personality and remarkable rise to fame had brought much business that had never gone beyond Mr. Harker's own office. David had caught the attention and interest of America's biggest men, and Mr. Harker, prominent and influential though he was, admitted to himself that he owed his contact with several new and most influential clients to their desire to meet David. Mr. Harker had exploited David carefully and well. He knew he owed much of David's success in society to Arline's guiding hand. Thank God the girl had dropped her original objections to him! He wondered why she had changed her mind. Arline was far too clever ever to allow her father to sense her own keen personal interest in David.

Not only had David been of value to Mr. Harker in the United States but his sensational tennis and magnificent victory at Wim-

bledon, followed by his two great wins in the Davis Cup, had made him a person of international importance. Already Mr. Harker had been able to reach certain prominent financiers in France and England through their interest in and desire to meet David. He had completed a couple of big deals already and he knew that next year, with David as an ace in the hole who might or might not play in Europe according to Mr. Harker's business arrangements, he was in a position where he might pull off something really big. He knew that one of the things men will spend money for is their sport, even though the players they are negotiating for never get a cent of the transaction or are aware of the fact that they are parties to such a deal. Yes, it had been a great year, just as he had told David. It had been fun, too. He liked Cooper —a fine fellow and learning fast to be a man of the world and a sportsman. The kid, young Billy, was just like him. He'd be a big asset to the Harker company when he grew up. Now Mary was different. She just didn't quite fit in the picture. It was a shame she didn't learn like David. Still she was a sweet

girl, inoffensive except when she made her unfortunate breaks of sportsmanship. Still one couldn't expect perfection and at least no one could object to her on any real grounds. It was only that she just wasn't a woman of the world like Arline. Arline! Now there was a girl. What a beautiful, clever, charming creature! Well, why not? She was his daughter and he had given her every advantage. He must say for her that she had made the most of those advantages.

He rolled down his desk. It was a beautiful day. Too bad he didn't know how to play tennis. It was a great game. He decided he would shoot a round of golf; he could always find a game at the club. He rang the bell and pulled on his coat. His secretary appeared at the door.

"I'm leaving for the day," he said as he picked up his hat.

He glanced at the clock. It was twelve noon. Yes. It was a great day. It certainly had been one great year.

CHAPTER XVIII

David sprung his big news on Mary and Billy at dinner. It was Billy's last night home before leaving for school, and Mary had insisted that she cook the dinner at home. David waited until they had done full justice to the honey-dew melon, thick juicy tenderloin steak, candied sweet potatoes, new corn, fresh hot rolls and coffee, finished off with Billy's favorite ice cream and chocolate sauce before he broke the news.

"Well," he said, "I saw the boss to-day."

Mary showed polite interest, while Billy only grunted from behind the sporting page of a paper he had smuggled to the table and was now brazenly reading.

"Yes, and he gave me a big raise."

"Oh, David, that's wonderful, I'm so glad." Mary rose, the ice cream platter poised in her hand. "Was it a big one?"

"Two thousand a year," said David proudly.

"Hot puppy! Not bad for winning the world's championship," said Billy succinctly.

"Why, Billy, how can you say that!" Mary turned indignantly. "David deserved it. He has worked very hard this year."

"Aw, cut your wisecracks, kid," David playfully mussed Billy's hair and pulled the paper out of his hand. "Yeah, he gave two thousand more a year and told me he was very proud of me."

"That's wonderful, David, I'm so glad." Mary bent and kissed him.

Billy jumped up. "Aw, gee, if you two are going to talk business or get mushy, I'm going to the movies." He grabbed a hat and started for the door.

"Don't be late, kid. You have to leave early to-morrow," David cautioned.

"I won't. I'll be in about ten." Billy disappeared out the door.

David watched his disappearing figure with a fond smile. "Gee, he's a swell kid," he said. Then, "Mary, that raise means I'm getting twelve thousand dollars next year. Not bad, is it?"

"No, David, but tell me, how does this raise really help you? Aren't you working on commission?"

"Yes, dear, of course I am."

"Well, if you are, will you really make more with this raise?"

"Why, yes!—er—no, that's so, of course not. I made over $14,000 this year. It only means I am guaranteed a little larger sum."

"Well, you would make it anyhow. I don't think Mr. Harker is so generous. Come to think of it, I don't see that he has really done anything for you."

"You don't understand, Mary. It isn't so much the raise as the fact that he's proud of me that pleases me."

"I'm pleased, too, that he's pleased, and I'm more proud of you, but I don't see that Mr. Harker has done anything. If he gave you a two-thousand-dollar bonus over the salary you earned, that would be something." Mary was just a little fed up on hearing the Harker praises sung by David. She had listened to them all over Europe.

"You know, David, I'm afraid we have been awfully extravagant this year. Haven't we?"

"Really, dear, I don't know. I haven't had time yet to see just what that trip abroad did cost. Whatever it was it was worth it." David refused to be downcast by anything.

"David, you are too happy-go-lucky. You should be more practical."

"Now, Mary, give me time. I only got the figures to-day from the office."

"Well, you should know, and I want to."

David rose to his feet.

"I'll go in my room and run over the figures. What will you do?"

"Oh, I have some dishes to wash." Mary picked up her apron and started to put it on.

"Let me help. That's just why I hate to eat at home. We ought to have a servant."

"My goodness, I love to do this once in a while. We don't need a regular servant. We only eat home once in about two weeks. This was a special occasion. Go in your room and don't bother me." She began piling the dishes on the table. "You'd be more trouble than help." Her smile took any sting out of her words.

David grinned, kissed her, and went into his room.

It was more than an hour later that Mary finished her job.

"David," she called.

He came out of his room, his coat off, hair ruffled.

"Goodness," she laughed, "you look busy."

"I'm not finished yet," he said. "It's longer than I thought. Do you mind if I finish?"

"Not at all. I'm going to bed and read."

He bent and kissed her.

"Good night and sweet dreams," he said gravely.

"Oh, I'll be awake when you come to bed," she replied.

"Don't stay awake. I'm waiting up for Billy and he may be later than he said. It's his last night at home."

She turned in the door of her bedroom.

"Well, don't be too late," she smiled.

David watched her door close, then sank in a chair by the table, his head in his hands. Why hadn't he had courage enough to tell her the truth as he had discovered it? He needed advice and comfort. Mary could have given both. She had been right. They had been extravagant. Worse than that. He had been

a fool. Why hadn't he kept closer track of his earnings and his expenditures? He had earned $14,700 it was true, but his expense sheet showed he had drawn more than twenty-two thousand dollars over the year. He was starting his next year more than seven thousand dollars in debt to the Harker company. He wondered uncomfortably if Mr. Harker knew it. Would he fire him when he found out? No, that was foolish. Of course Harker knew it and had agreed to it, otherwise the advance would not have been forthcoming. He had no reason to fear dismissal from discovery.

Still there was little comfort in that. More than half of next year's guaranteed salary was already drawn. There were big expenses facing him at once. Billy's schooling must be paid for—the first half year was due now. Well, he'd meet that anyway. The kid must not be robbed of his chance just because he'd been a damn fool and spent too much money last year. How in God's name could he have spent so much money? His mind chased back over the year. Well, this apartment was rather too big and a little expensive, but at the time it hadn't seemed so. Still, they could move to

a less expensive one now and save. Mary wouldn't mind. She would stand by him once she realized. He didn't grudge one cent he had spent on Mary or Billy. They had had nothing they didn't deserve. He had bought more tennis clothes than he really needed. He'd cut down next year. What a fool he had been in Europe! He had spent money there foolishly. All the parties on the boat, too. He must have spent more than a thousand dollars that last night in Paris and on the boat. For what?—several bad headaches and what he thought had been a lot of fun. He must have been pretty drunk that night in Paris. He had a confused memory of the evening. The only clear picture in his mind was of Billy taking a drink of champagne out of his glass. He must speak to the kid about that to-night. He wouldn't have the boy drinking. He felt tired and drawn. He needed something to brace him up. He went to the sideboard and poured himself out a highball and carried it back to his chair. What a fool he was! Took a job that paid a fabulous salary and here he was seven thousand dollars in debt in a year. God! In Hobansville $14,700 was a fortune,

not a year's income! He had married Mary and come to New York to live because it was his big chance, his and Mary's and Billy's. It was to be his economic freedom. Hell! He had been better off back in Hobansville earning two thousand dollars a year. At least he had never been in debt. Since he had come on here all he had done was play tennis, contract bridge, and drink, with occasional periods at the office or visits to the theater. For a moment he hated the life. He wished intensely he was back in Hobansville. Then he remembered Arline! She seemed a cooling breeze in the heated air of his thoughts. If he hadn't come to New York he wouldn't have met her. She had given him inspiration —not the inspiration of love that Mary had given him that had led him to accept the position for the money that was in it, but the inspiration to become one of her kind of people, one of the men who could dress, talk, and move anywhere, sure of themselves, to become a clubman and a sportsman.

It was for Mary and Billy that he had won his greatest triumphs on the court, yet through them he had attained closer to Arline's kind.

Yet it was also through those same triumphs that he had become enmeshed in this net of debt that held him. He could see no real way out. He was champion of the world, champion of the United States, champion of England, Davis Cup star. He must play tennis. The world expected him to play tennis. His employer expected him to play tennis. My God, even Billy and Mary expected him to play tennis. What was it Billy had said tonight when he had heard of David's raise?—Oh, yes, "Not bad for winning the world's championship." The kid was right. That's just what it was. Harker was paying him for the titles he won—amateur sport—hell——!

The door opened and Billy breezed in.

"Gosh, Dave—swell picture—*She Showed 'em All*, and I'll say she did! Wasn't much left to show."

David came to earth with a crash. What was it he wanted to say to Billy? Oh, yes—that night in Paris.

"Sit down, kid," he said.

Billy threw his hat on the table and perched on the edge of it.

"Yeah, what's the dope?"

"You're off to school to-morrow." Dave had difficulty getting his mind clear and around to the point.

"Yeah, that's no news, Dave. I know it only too well."

"It's the last chance I'll have to speak to you." Dave lifted his highball and took a long swallow. His mouth felt dry. "You remember our last night in Paris."

"Sure thing."

"Well, that night you took a drink of champagne out of my glass. Remember, Billy?" Dave drained his glass and set it down.

"Yeah." The boy's eyes followed David's hand and then came up to his face.

"Well, I won't have you taking drinks. Get me?"

Billy smiled and rose from the table.

"Sure," he said.

David tried desperately to find what else he intended to say. Somehow there was a period in that one word of Billy's. Billy stood silent, waiting.

David rose and turned toward his room. At least he had made his wishes clear. As he passed the boy, he gave him a friendly box on the ear.

"Good-night, Egg," he said lightly.

"Good-night, Dave."

David smiled back at him and closed the door of his room behind him.

Billy's eyes went from the closed door of the room to the empty glass and back again.

"What the hell——?" he muttered.

★ ★ ★

Billy left for school the following morning. He had no further talk of any moment with David and had no ideas of the problems that faced his brother. He was glad to be going back to St. Bernard's. He had enjoyed Europe and it had been great to have all that tennis with Dave and the other great players, but he wished often for the gang from school. Now he was going back, with football, hockey, tennis, and all the things he enjoyed only partially marred by the necessity of study. Billy was a bit upset about David. Why did old Dave jump all over him for tasting a bit of champagne when he himself was cockeyed from it? Even last night when Dave had been preaching to him he was drinking a highball.

Dave wasn't such a boob as to suppose that he, Billy, had never tasted liquor. Gosh, last year at school it seemed to him all the older boys drank more or less, when they could get away with it and not get caught. He had only taken a chance on it once last year, and then only because he didn't want to be thought a baby. He hated the taste of the stuff anyway, so Dave need not worry about his drinking. Still he couldn't quite understand why it was such a terrible sin for him, yet quite O.K. for Dave. Well, there was no reason to worry about it now. Some time he'd sit down and argue it out with Dave quietly. To-day he was going back to school, to the gang, and he was glad. He rather hated to leave behind some of the girls he had met on the boat. Gee, one of them was swell. She was a peach of a looker, danced well, and he had an idea she could neck. The only time he had mustered up courage to attempt to find out, Mary had interrupted. Still, that had not worried him much. Billy was not a consistent necker. He merely necked when occasion demanded it. It was part of his education from St. Bernard's, one that was not included in the curriculum, or

known to exist by the school authorities. It was the development of the interchange of views on such matters among the students. During school terms it was entirely an academic interest, except in isolated cases, owing to lack of opportunity, but none the less, "necking" was definitely included in the accomplishments of Young America.

David went to the train with Billy and saw him off. Any friction that had existed the previous night was forgotten and they parted the best of pals. David hurried to the office, eager to get to work. He intended to stay right on the job, no more tennis for a long while, no parties, no week-ends. He was going to work and earn a lot of money. In his office he found a message from Mr. Harker to come at once to see him. David reported immediately, hoping it might be some big deal or important client.

"Hello, David," Mr. Harker greeted him. "Won't keep you a minute. The committee at the Virginia Hot Springs tournament have wired me for your entry. The event comes next week. You need not reach there until Wednes-

day. Arline is going down and wants you to play mixed doubles with her."

"That's awfully nice of her, Mr. Harker, but I'm afraid I can't get away."

"Nonsense," Mr. Harker smiled indulgently. "It's only a few days. I'll go down with you. I'd enjoy it."

"But I've been away so much, sir, I really should do a little work."

"Oh, forget that. You need a little vacation and light tennis after the summer you've had."

"But sir, really——" David began.

"Now just let me settle this." Mr. Harker dismissed him with a wave of the hand. "I'll wire them you'll arrive on Wednesday, to hold your matches. That's all!"

David went back to his office in inward revolt. What was the use? Even his employer wouldn't let him work. He didn't want to play tennis; he wanted to work, to earn money, to get out of debt once more and feel free. He hated the thought of tennis; he never wanted to see a tennis ball or racquet again. Sulkily he picked up his mail and started to

open it. The first two letters were announcements of tennis tournaments. In disgust he tore them up and threw them in the waste basket. The third was a request for him to play an exhibition at Orange, New Jersey, next Saturday, signed by Richard Collier, one of Mr. Harker's closest friends and most important clients. Well, that would have to be done. He knew that there was no escape there. He went on with his mail. Everything in it was tennis, requests for exhibitions, invitations to tournaments, requests for autographs, questions, silly questions from sillier people, wanting to know this, that, and the other thing about tennis. Tennis! God! Not one single business letter in the lot. He a business man. Hell! No! He was a glorified Spalding's Tennis Annual.

His telephone rang. He picked it up. Mr. Harker's voice came over the wire.

"Oh, Cooper, Dick Collier just phoned me to ask if I would put in my word with you to play an exhibition for him at Orange on Saturday."

David had a wild desire to shout, "No, go to hell," into the telephone. Instead he said

calmly, "I have Mr. Collier's letter and am just answering to say I'll be delighted."

"That's fine, Cooper; Collier's a great pal of mine. Good client. Good-bye."

David put down the telephone and gazed off into space. He seemed to see himself the center of a never-ending stream of tennis balls and racquets that swirled and swirled around him, enmeshing him like a net from which he could not free himself, while voices rang in his ears: "Will you play an exhibition for me?" With a start he came to himself, his hand reached out and rang the bell on the desk. A trim stenographer entered.

"Good morning, Miss Richards," he said. "Please, take this letter. 'To Mr. Richard Collier, 120 Broadway. Dear Mr. Collier, Your letter received. It will afford me great pleasure to play at Orange on Saturday. You are more than kind to invite me. Looking forward to seeing you there, sincerely.' Type it at once and bring it in. I'll sign it personally. I want it to go at once. That's all just now, Miss Richards. Thank you."

The door closed behind her as David reached for a cigarette.

"That's a good day's work," he reflected bitterly.

That night he told Mary the exact situation. He knew her too well to attempt to hide anything. He wanted her to know the exact truth. Naturally she was surprised. She had had no idea that they had spent anything like so much money. She thought they had lived up to their income, but it had never occurred to her that they had gone into debt. However, she met the situation with her inherent soundness.

"David, we must cut down at once. This apartment is leased only until the first of next month and you are not to renew the lease. We will get something much cheaper."

"But, Mary dear, we can cut down somewhere else or——"

"No, dear, that is settled. I start hunting for a place to-morrow. I have two whole weeks. Now let me see. I don't need any clothes, and if necessary we can sell the victrola and piano."

David laughed and took her in his arms.

"Dearest, don't be foolish. We are not paupers, I have a fine position and a big sal-

ary and a great chance. It is only that I wanted you to know just what happened last year so you won't let me make the same mistake next."

"David, you are a dear, taking all the blame on yourself. You can't, though, for I was terribly extravagant and so was Billy."

"I'm glad that Billy will get his schooling just the same. That is very important, Mary. The kid must have every chance."

"Yes, David, and he will."

"And I'm going to work hard and make lots of money."

"Sure you are. I know it, David."

"Oh, by the way, I'm going to Virginia Hot Springs for the tournament. It's next week. Want to come?"

"Why, David, I thought you were going to work so hard! And here you go running off to play tennis first thing."

"I didn't want to go, honestly, I didn't, but Mr. Harker insists. Want to come?"

"Well, he shouldn't insist. You ought to stay home and work."

"What can I do when the big chief orders me to go? He's going with me, and Arline will

be there. For the third time, do you want to come?"

She looked sharply at him for a moment, then: "No dear, I will stay here and find our new home."

"Oh, Mary, you'd better come."

"No dear, it's expensive there, and remember we're poor now."

"Stop fooling, Mary. Come on along."

"No, really, I would rather stay here."

"Honest to goodness?"

"Honest to goodness."

A fleeting expression of relief crossed his face which Mary was quick to catch.

"Besides," she said sweetly, "Arline will be there, so you will be kept busy."

"Mary——" he began reproachfully, but she hurried on.

"Let's forget Hot Springs and talk about our new home." She drew him to a big armchair, pushed him into it, and crawled up in his lap. "Now, tell me, David, do you prefer the Salvation Army Rescue Home or the State Poor House?"

CHAPTER XIX

David had a wonderful time at Virginia Hot Springs. The entry was good enough to provide good tennis but not good enough to extend him at any time. He and Arline won the mixed doubles almost as easily as he won the singles. It was distinctly a society event. All the fashionable set in which Arline moved had come down, so that the nights proved to be as strenuous as the days for David. He was dancing, playing contract, and drinking until all hours, always with Arline as his partner. They were together so constantly that even her set, careless of conventions to the point where they almost did away with them, began to talk. Arline was fully aware of the talk and did not mind it. She had played safe all over Europe, as long as Mary was on hand, but now that they were back in the

United States, where she was more certain of herself and her power, she decided to open the battle in earnest. All's fair in love and war, and Arline admitted to herself she was definitely in love with David. She was laying her own plans with skill. She knew David well enough to know that he had no suspicion of her love for him, and wouldn't believe it if he had. She believed she knew Mary well enough to know how to handle her. All she needed was to show David the contrast between Mary and herself a few times and then keep David close at hand as much as possible.

With this in view she started deiliberately organizing tennis week-ends at various places for the coming months. Several of her friends had indoor courts on their country estates, so that week-end tennis parties were right in order. Before David returned from Virginia Hot Springs he was committed to at least four week-end house parties with Arline. Arline was far too clever to make any definite move to show her love to David. A passing affair was not in her scheme of life at all. She was too clever for that, and too fastidious to be in any sense promiscuous. She

loved David and intended to marry him some day, a day that would arrive at the earliest possible moment that she could manage. She dismissed such a minor matter as his wife from her thoughts. After all, what were divorce courts for if not to meet just such situations? She never doubted David's ultimate willingness to fall in with her wishes, and as far as Mary was concerned she did not count.

Meanwhile at home Mary had been searching for a suitable apartment. She had had no success. She either found the ones she liked far beyond their pocketbook, or the ones they could afford so small and out-of-the-way that she would not consider them. By the time David came home, Mary was in despair.

"Oh, David, I can't find anything we could live in," she wailed.

"Leave it to me, Mary, I'll fix it," said David with confidence.

The following day at the office he mentioned his difficulties to Mr. Harker.

"Why, that's easy. Go to the Vanderbilt Hotel. They will give you a tennis rate. If you have any trouble, I'll fix it."

David was relieved. He liked the Vander-

bilt. It was central and would be nice for Mary. Also, he would be getting some slight return from tennis. God knows the game owed him something after all he had spent last year. He forgot that he had only made it to spend through his connection with Mr. Harker, which in turn was directly traceable to tennis. He went directly to the hotel.

"Yes, Mr. Cooper," the Vanderbilt manager was charming. "Mr. Harker has already phoned me. I can give you a suite, sitting room and two bedrooms." He named a price that was music to David's ears.

Mary was delighted with the arrangement and the rooms. She had some of her own furniture sent down and put the rest in storage. She was pained to hear about David's engagements for the tennis week-ends. She felt he was wasting valuable time when he should have been at the office. She went with him to the first two, but felt so out of touch with the group and its life that she begged off from the others. David agreed to her decision with hardly concealed relief. He had found Mary a bit of a strain on these parties. She seemed to be always at his elbow, with a disapprov-

ing glance leveled at any glass he lifted or any story he told. Then, too, she looked so out of place with the smartly gowned girls. He did wish she could learn to dress with style.

All through October and November he was dragged around the East to play tennis. It seemed to him he was never at the office two days in succession. It was only by most unusual firmness on his part, and the obvious fact that he was suffering from a severe cold, that he avoided a trip to Mexico City for the Mexican Championship. An old friend of Mr. Harker's who was living in Mexico City had been appointed a committee of one to get David for the tournament and he worked so well on Mr. Harker that David feared for a while that even his cold would not avail to save him, but at the last minute Mr. Harker relented. It was due partially to Arline, who wanted David herself for the last of her tennis week-end parties. David felt properly grateful, and thoroughly enjoyed the social tennis down on Long Island, whither she bore him off in triumph.

November merged into December and Mary and David were busy with Christmas plans.

They were to go back to Hobansville to her parents for Christmas. Billy would be home for the holidays and it was decided that David would take ten days' vacation until after New Year and the three of them spend it together at Mary's home. David and Mary were to sail early in January for the Riviera, accompanied by Mr. Harker and Arline. Billy was to return to school until June and again join them in England as he had done the previous season. David had tried hard to persuade Mr. Harker to cancel the Riviera trip. He wanted to stay in New York and work, but Mr. Harker would not listen to him. He had set his heart on David playing the Riviera season, and besides he wanted the trip himself. He had certain business deals which had reached a point that needed his presence abroad at the right moment, yet he would not appear to have come over especially for them. It would appear just a happy accident that he was on the ground. This trip with David would provide a natural and logical reason to be there.

Everything was pointing to another great year when the first bombshell dropped into the calm.

CHAPTER XX

BILLY was expelled from school. There seemed no extenuating circumstances. He had been caught on the school grounds with a girl, a girl whose reputation in the town did not help matters, and to complete the wreck Billy had undeniably been drinking! When caught he refused to answer questions or make any statement and was sent home.

Mary and David were breakfasting in their sitting room at the Vanderbilt when Billy arrived. They had had no warning. The wire from school had been sent to their old address and not forwarded. The door opened and in walked Master Cooper.

"Billy!" cried Mary and David together.

"Hello!" he said sheepishly.

"What's happened? Why are you here?" David sprang to his feet. "Are you hurt?"

"Nope! Just fired."

"Fired?"

"Yeah, chucked out."

Billy put down his bag and pulled off his coat. He was rather white around the mouth. Mary put out her hand to him. He walked over and kissed her.

"I'm sorry, Billy, terribly sorry," she said.

"Fired? What for?" David's question cut sharply into the pause.

Billy's head came up proudly. He looked David straight in the eye.

"I got caught drunk with a girl on the school grounds," he said, clearly.

"Oh, Billy!" Mary stared up at him horrified.

"What sort of a girl?" David's voice was harsh.

"Aw gee, you know, Dave, just a—a—girl."

"God! Billy——"

Mary jumped up.

"I'm going to finish dressing," she said, starting for her room.

Billy's voice stopped her.

"No, Mary. If you don't mind I'd like you to hear the whole story since you have heard this much."

"Billy, you haven't had breakfast. Let's get you something to eat and then you can tell us." Mary reached for the bell.

"No. Not yet, please. I'd rather get this off my chest. Please sit down. You too, will you, Dave?"

David settled back in his chair.

"All right, fire ahead, kid," he said.

"Well, listen, Dave. I'm not trying to alibi myself. I deserved to get fired, but I want you to understand. You see, Dave, most of the boys up at school drink a bit and slip bounds whenever they get a chance."

"Now, Billy, I thought I told you——"

"Please, Dave, let me tell you. You can ride me afterward."

"But a girl, too, Billy—that sort of a girl!"

"Wait, Dave. That's what I want you to hear, and Mary, too. I don't mind so much about the drinking. I want to clear up this girl thing. My roommate, Bobby Walker—you know him. Gee, he's a swell guy but he's a wild Indian. He used to chase out often at night after lights and go down to the village. I knew it, of course, and wished he wouldn't do it so often. I used to sneak out sometimes,

but only if the whole gang had a feed on. Well, night before last I heard Bobby go out right after lights. We used to crawl out the window and drop off the porch roof. It was a cinch. We had a feed on that night and I thought Bobby was going there, so I took my time and followed. When I got to old shack we used for our eats-house most of the fellows were there, but no sign of Bobby. We played some cards, and ate some candy and cakes, and a couple of the fellows had some booze along in pocket flasks. I don't know where they got it and I didn't have any. Never have had. Anyway, I took three or four drinks and was feeling kinda queer when all of a sudden Spike Thomas, one of my classmates, comes tearing in and says:

"'Hey, that damn fool, Bobby Walker's all lit up and got Dirty Gert out by the gate, threatening to bring her in to meet Prexy.' Gee, we all knew who Dirty Gert was, although I had never met her. Her name is Gertrude Roberts, but all the fellows call her Dirty Gert. She is pretty tough, but if Bobby ever got caught cockeyed with her, it was the grand bounce for him. None of the gang

seemed to want to do anything, so I grabbed Spike and yanked him with me. 'Come on, let's get Bobby into bed,' I said to him.

"Well, gee, it was awful. By the time we found them Bobby had Gert right up by the headmaster's house and he was awful noisy. He was awful drunk, too, almost out on his feet.

"'You get him to bed,' I told Spike, 'and I'll get rid of her.' So Spike grabs Bobby, who just makes a feeble little scrap and out he passes right on Spike's hands. Spike picks him and lugs him off to our room. I got Gert by the arm and tried to lead her away to the village, but she is just as drunk as Bobby and won't go.

"'Lemme go,' she said, 'or I'll yell,' and yell she did. One squawk after another. Gee, it was fierce. I tried to shut her up, but I couldn't and like a damn fool I just stood there. Suddenly the front door opens and out comes the headmaster. 'What's all this noise, young woman?' he said. Then he saw me: 'Who is that?'

"'It's Cooper, sir,' I said.

"'What are you doing here, Cooper?'

"'Nothing, sir,' I said.

"'I'm not so sure. Why aren't you in bed and how did this girl get here?'

"Well, gee, Dave, I couldn't answer that, could I? Now, honest, Mary, could I? Gosh, I couldn't say Bobby'd brought her, and I couldn't tell him where I'd been without giving away all the gang that were at the feed. I just didn't answer. The headmaster came up to me.

"'Cooper, go in there,' he pointed to his door. He turned to Gert.

"'Go away at once,' he said to her. 'Aw, go to hell,' she said and I—well, I'm afraid I laughed. Somehow it struck me funny. The headmaster turned on me. 'That will do, Cooper,' he said, and caught me by the arm to hurry me in and then I guess he must have smelled the booze.

"'You been drinking!' he said.

"Well, gee, that was easy to see so I said, 'Yes.' 'Where did you get it?' he demanded, and, of course, I couldn't tell him so I just kept quiet. He questioned me about half an hour, then made a search of the dorms, but all the gang were wise to trouble and everybody was in bed. Gee, Bobby was dead to the

world, but fortunately the headmaster just looked in our room, shoved me in, and said, 'Report at my office at nine o'clock.'

"I reported all right, but all he did was ask me the same questions all over again and I just stood still and didn't answer. Finally he told me I was fired from school and—and here I am."

Mary rose to her feet and walked to Billy. She bent and kissed him.

"I'm terribly sorry, Billy. Don't worry, it will all come right." A little sob escaped her and she disappeared to her room.

David still sat silent, his head in his hands. Billy went to him and stood by his side.

"Dave!"

One of David's hands sought and found the boy's.

"Billy, you're a swell kid," he said.

"Dave!" A ring of joy was in Billy's voice.

Dave understood. He would! He was a grand sport.

"I'm glad you were not responsible for the girl being there, Billy."

"I am too, Dave, but honest I'm not that kind."

"No, kid, you're a good sport."

"I hope so. I try to be, Dave. I suppose I was a damn fool but I couldn't see anything else to do but keep my mouth shut."

"You were a damn fool, Billy, but not in keeping your mouth shut. You had to protect your pal. No, you were a damn fool to drink."

"Gee, Dave, why? All the fellows do."

"Then they are damn fools."

"Are they, Dave? What about you?"

"Yes, and I'm a damn fool too. The biggest of them all." David's hand closed over Billy's. "Come on, kid, forget this now and get some breakfast and to-night we'll talk over what's best to do. But don't forget one thing, Billy —a fellow who drinks is a damn fool, and believe me I know."

Billy laughed a queer little shaky laugh.

"Well, I tell the world I've learned."

CHAPTER XXI

David went directly to Mr. Harker and told him about Billy's dismissal from St. Bernard's. Since it was due to Mr. Harker that Billy had originally gone to St. Bernard's, David preferred to have Mr. Harker hear the facts from him rather than from the school, or second hand via Arline. Mr. Harker was greatly exercised. He wanted to set wheels immediately in motion to get Billy back, even at the expense of telling the truth about Bobby Walker. David absolutely refused even to consider such a step and said further he would not allow Billy to go back to St. Bernard's under any circumstances. It was finally decided between the two men that Billy would accompany them to the Riviera. He was still young enough to miss a year at school and not

be behind boys of his own age in college. Then, too, both David and Mr. Harker felt it would be a wonderful thing for the boy's tennis. David made up his mind to play doubles with Billy in the Riviera tournaments.

Billy was in the seventh heaven of delight when he heard about the Riviera trip and David's intention to play doubles with him in the tournaments. He had been almost overcome by the way in which both Mary and David had stood by him and believed in him, in what many families would have considered a disgraceful episode. Then, too, he and David had talked out this liquor question and Dave had promised to go on the wagon for him. Gee, Dave was a great guy. He saw it wasn't fair to expect something from Billy that he wasn't willing to give, too.

Hot puppy! They would show those foreigners how this tennis game would be played. Gosh, he'd work his fingers and feet off for good old Dave, and Mary, too. Gee, she sure was swell. Never a word about his being fired or anything except just sympathy and understanding. Gosh, Dave was a lucky guy to get a girl like Mary. Wonder if he'd be as lucky

some day? His mind turned back unconsciously to Hobansville and Alice. Golly, if only Alice was a swell looker like the kids here in New York. She was a nice kid, like Mary, too, in many ways. She had always been wonderful to him. He ought to write her. Sufferin' cats, when was it he had written her last?—Gosh, not for months. It would serve him darned well right if she'd forgotten him. Forgotten him! Gee, he almost gasped at the thought. He'd write at once. He dashed to desk and hunted furiously for pen and paper. After all, Alice was his girl, and, gee—they were going back to Hobansville in a few weeks. He almost burned up the paper with the speed of his pen. Suppose she had forgotten him?

The morning before the Coopers were to leave for Hobansville David received a letter from the headmaster of St. Bernard's School. Mary, Billy, and he were at breakfast when it arrived. He read it through in silence, then turned to Billy who, having recognized the stationery, was watching him anxiously.

"This will interest you, kid," he said. "Let me read it to you both.

"Dear Mr. Cooper:

"I feel I must write you fully concerning some developments connected with the dismissal of your young brother William from St. Bernard's School. You are fully acquainted with the occurrences up to the time of his leaving this institution. However, upon the morning the school was dismissed for the Christmas vacation, William's roommate, Robert Walker, came to my office with the request for an interview. He told me that he, and not William, had been responsible for the presence on the school grounds of the girl, Gertrude Roberts. He said that he had been drinking and did not realize what he was doing. He stated that William had not been with him and the girl and that the only way in which William figured in the matter was in an attempt to shield him and send the girl away, so that when caught William had maintained silence out of loyalty to his roommate. Robert expressed deep shame at his own silence at the time and said he could not leave school without confessing.

"Naturally, much as I regretted the necessity of the step, he was expelled and will not return after Christmas.

"It was and still is my belief that William had been drinking that night, so his expulsion from school during the past weeks was a necessary step. However, since he was in no way involved with the girl, Gertrude Roberts, and his refusal to answer my questions was due to mistaken loyalty to his

roommate and not as I thought at the time to deliberate insubordination, I wish to make what amends I can consistent with school discipline. Therefore, Mr. Cooper, I have placed the full facts before you and will be glad to welcome William back in school after the holidays.

"With kind regards to William and yourself,

"ZEKIEL HARDWICK,

"Headmaster."

David looked up from the letter to find Billy's eyes shining.

"Gee, that's swell of Bobby, isn't it? He's a great guy."

Mary smiled at him. "I think he might have done it a little sooner," she said.

"Well, kid, you can go back if you want to." David was studying the boy's face.

"Gee, Dave!" Billy's smile disappeared as if by magic. "I can't do that."

"Why not?"

"Well, gosh, you see all the gang would make me out a martyr or something. Then I'd have to apologize to the headmaster and everything. I couldn't do it."

"It doesn't sound so terrible to me!" David smiled.

"No, it doesn't sound terrible, but it is. Gosh, I'd feel as if I'd squealed on Bobby every time I went in my room and he wasn't there. Ah, Dave, don't make me go back!"

"How about next year, Billy? Would you feel the same way?"

"No. Don't you see? It's a new year and sort of a new deal all around."

"Yes, Billy, I see. O.K, kid. Next year, it is!"

"Gosh, Dave, that's swell! And I won't miss playing doubles with you on the Riviera after all."

"Would that have been much of a loss?"

"I'll tell the cockeyed world!"

"Well, Billy, don't worry. I'll write Hardwick you'll be back next year. That's settled, so I'll get along to the office. So long, kid." He picked up his hat and kissed Mary goodbye. In the door he turned. "Say, kid," he said dryly, "don't get fired out next year if you can help it. These vacations are a little expensive."

That trip to Hobansville was a distinct success from every angle. Billy found Alice had not forgotten him. More than that, she had not even been angry at him for his neglect,

only hurt, a condition that quickly healed in her pleasure at seeing him again. Also he discovered she'd grown much prettier. Her trip to New York had taught her many things. Before the week was over Billy was once more at ease in his mind. Yes, Alice was his girl.

Mary was given a royal welcome by all her friends and family. It was her first trip home since her wedding, and everyone set out to show how glad they were to see her. She was the queen of the moment. This burst of attention, coming as it did after a period of depression and restraint, did much to heal her wounded vanity and drive away the clouds of worry that had cast shadows over the past few months. She was distinctly the best dressed and most stylish woman in Hobansville, a fact she recognized and in which she gloried. David was overjoyed to get away from the atmosphere of tennis, sport, and bonds in which he had lived for a year, and found pleasure and a soothing influence in renewing his old friendships and swapping experiences with old pals. He was slightly amused to note a certain air of awe toward him that all of Hobansville bore in his presence. It flattered

him, even while it amused him. Somehow he did not find himself quite so far out of tune with the old town as he imagined he would be after all these months of city life. He found he still spoke the same language as his old townspeople.

New Year came all too soon, and with it the Coopers' return to New York. David had to be back at the office to complete arrangements before sailing in less than three weeks. In response to the urgent pleas of the town in general and Mary's parents in particular, David promised that all three would return to spend Mary's birthday at home in Hobansville on a week the following Saturday. Great plans were on foot in the town at once. Not only would they give Mary a birthday party but also a big farewell party to the national junior and senior champions as they sailed for fresh triumphs in Europe. Hobansville set out to spread itself.

CHAPTER XXII

The Coopers had been back in New York for more than a week. They were to leave again at ten the next morning for Hobansville. Mary had not been feeling too well. In fact as she looked back she decided she had not felt herself for weeks. She was alone at the hotel, Billy having gone downtown with David. She was busying herself with odds and ends of packing for their trip when she quietly fainted away, almost scaring to death the chambermaid who was straightening up the room. The maid notified the manager, who in turn hastily summoned the resident physician. By the time he arrived Mary was once more conscious, almost herself, and feeling, though shaky, just a little like a fool. She could not understand it at all.

Finally he completed his examinations and settled back in his chair.

"Well, Doctor," she said, "there's nothing the matter with me, is there?"

"My dear Mrs. Cooper, nothing to worry about, but something over which to rejoice. You are going to have a baby."

* * *

Mary rested quietly on her bed for a long while after the doctor left. Her mind raced on, lost in thoughts of all his diagnosis meant to her and David. How delighted David would be! He adored children, and now to have one of his own! Mary was a little overwhelmed herself. Not that she faced her coming ordeal with fear. Far from it. She had always hoped for children. Back in Hobansville, before they came to New York, her whole thought of the future was a home centered around David and their children. It was the crowning ambition of her life. She believed it was his, too. Somehow in the rush and hurry of their existence during the past year, a year full of new and thrilling experiences, a life with a far wider scope than she had ever dreamed about back in Hobansville, the little

home and children had faded from the foreground of her thoughts. Not that she had forgotten it: merely had she shoved it just a bit farther along the road of life. She was sure the same was true of David. Somehow there hadn't been time during this hectic year to consider settling down to raise a family. It came to her rather as a shock to find that, quite unplanned, the future was definitely shaping itself for her. She wanted her baby, wanted it with her whole soul. It would solve so many problems for David and herself. They couldn't go chasing all over the world, either before the baby arrived or for some years after. David would naturally be free to play the most important tennis tournaments, but his days of gallivanting here, there, and everywhere at everybody's beck and call were over. He would never consent to leave her and little David—she was sure the baby would be a boy and naturally "little David"—for any length of time. She could hardly wait to tell him. How delighted he would be! She'd tell him just as soon as he came home. No, she couldn't, either. Billy would be with him, and she didn't want Billy to know just yet.

Time enough for that when David could tell him. Then, too, the Harkers were coming to dine with them that evening. Mr. Harker wanted to settle all plans for their European trip. She wondered what effect the baby's coming would have on their plans. She was to expect little David some time in the summer. At least she could make the Riviera trip. She was coming home before the baby was due—this she made up her mind to definitely. Her baby was going to be born on American soil. She did hope David wouldn't mind too much her upsetting all his tennis plans. If all went well, he could return to Europe in time for the Davis Cup matches, even possibly defend at Wimbledon, although she feared the latter was impossible. Already she was busy planning little David's future, her mind sketching bits of his life from birth to schooldays with great distinctness and perfect confidence in its accuracy. She was supremely happy.

The day passed quickly for Mary, filled with her thoughts and her plans. David and Billy came in about six to find her looking well and unusually happy. They dashed off

to change for dinner, while Mary busied herself with last-minute preparations for their guests, so that even if she had desired to do so there was no chance to impart her wonderful story to David.

Mr. Harker and Arline arrived on time and dinner found a cheerful group around the table, each one full of plans for the coming journey.

"You know, David," Mr. Harker said, "I am most anxious to have us do well at Monte Carlo. George Butler is an old pal of mine from schooldays. He has made very good, and is to-day a very wealthy man. Monte Carlo is his special tournament, and he has given a famous trophy for the international doubles championship that has never been won by the United States. I am most anxious for you two boys to win it."

"Well, Billy and I will do our best. Eh, kid!" replied David.

"I'll tell the world," mumbled Billy around a large mouthful of ice cream.

"By the way, Billy," Mr. Harker remarked, "there is the McComber Cup, open to college boys under twenty-one. It's a shame you

aren't in college so you could play for it. It's held now by Junior Coen, you know. He will defend this year."

"Yeah," said Billy. "Well, that lets me out, anyway, even if I were in college. That guy's a bit too hot for me yet awhile."

"Arline, we're playing mixed doubles, aren't we?" asked David.

"Cut it out, Dave, Arline's playing with me," Billy cut in quickly. "Aren't you, Arline?"

"Surely, Billy," Arline smiled at him. "Why should I play with David when I can get you? I want a *good* partner."

"There! See, Dave, Arline knows her tennis."

"Billy, I'm not joking," Arline said. "I mean about playing with you. We'll play one tournament together on the trip surely."

"Hot puppy! And we'll clean up. Hey, Dave, get Helen Wills, and we'll show you two how this mixed game should be played."

"All right, kid, I'll call her up by long-distance from Hobansville when we get home on Friday."

"Are you going away, David?" asked Arline quickly.

"Yes, we're going back to spend Mary's birthday with her father and mother. It comes next Saturday. The town is giving her a big party. It's a big time in the old town when Mary comes home."

"Oh, but David, I have promised Mildred Vandergriff we would spend the week-end at her home and play some tennis exhibitions. It's most important. She's invited lots of people for it."

"Sorry, Arline, I wish you'd told me sooner. This trip has been arranged a long time."

"But, David, what can I do? It's all arranged. You must come."

"I'm terribly sorry, Arline, but I don't see how it's possible. I'd love to do it, you know that."

Mr. Harker cut in. "You know who Mildred Vandergriff is, don't you, David! She is the daughter of Horace Vandergriff, the big oil magnate. We have a large proposition pending with him at present, you know. I'd like to see you do it if possible."

"Well, I'm sorry, Mr. Harker, I don't see just how I can arrange it. I have promised to take Mary and Billy out home. They are

counting on it, and so are Mary's parents—in fact so is the whole town."

"Well, for heaven's sake," Arline cut in sharply, "let Mary go and take Billy. It's her birthday, not yours. That ought to keep the town happy. I insist you come with me."

"Yes, David," Mary cut in calmly, "that seems such a good solution, doesn't it?"

"Aw gee, Mary," Billy began, but Arline rushed in.

"There you are, David—see, even Mary sees how sensible it is."

"But Arline," David glanced at Mary. He thought she looked a little white and wondered if she were well. That party at Vandergriffs' would be fun and might be worth a lot of money to him. If Mary really didn't mind maybe he could manage it after all.

"It's all settled," Arline dismissed the subject. "You are coming with me, and Mary will take Billy home with her. Now let's get this mixed doubles matter on the Riviera all fixed up."

The rest of the evening passed without incident. Only David noticed that Mary was unusually quiet, while around her eyes lurked

shadows. He was afraid she was very tired. He must stop her doing too much. The few days at home would do her good. Just as the Harkers were leaving, Arline said to David:

"Don't forget about the Vandergriffs. I'll call for you in the car Friday afternoon and we will motor down. Good-night, Mary. We had a delightful time. Good-night, Billy."

"So glad you came, Arline," said Mary sweetly. "I'm sure David will be ready Friday."

"So long, pardner," called Billy.

"Good-bye, David," Mr. Harker shook hands. "I'm glad you're going to the Vandergriffs', it's most important from a business angle. Good-night, Mrs. Cooper, delightful evening. Good-night, Billy, good-night."

David walked to the elevator with the Harkers and returned to find Mary seated in a chair by the table, reading. Billy, curled up on the sofa, was lost in a funny paper. David picked up a newspaper and settled down in his favorite armchair.

"A nice evening, dear," he said to Mary.

"Yes—very." A little shake, almost a sob, broke the even tone of her voice.

He looked up quickly. A tear shone in Mary's eye.

"What's the matter, dear?" he asked anxiously. "Tired?"

"David, are you going to Vandergriffs'?"

"Why, yes, I think so, Mary. I thought that was all settled."

"You are really going?"

"Yes, dear, I can't get out of it. Mr. Harker and Arline both want me to."

"But Billy and I want you to come home with us."

"Why, Mary, I can't. Don't you see it's a matter of business?"

"But David, what has business to do with it? It's my birthday. Doesn't that count more?"

Billy came out of the funny paper, his attention caught by the tones of their voices.

"Yes, dear, of course it counts, but I can't come with you."

"Why not?"

"Because Mr. Harker and Arline practically ordered me to go to Vandergriffs'. I must go."

"Oh," Mary's voice rose hysterically, "Mr. Harker and Arline ordered."

"Gee, I think I'll go out, if you'll excuse me." Billy jumped to his feet.

"Billy, sit down," Mary's voice rang stern, all hysteria vanished. Billy sank on the couch. "I want you to hear what I have to say to David. I think you should."

"Mary, for heaven's sake—you're not yourself," David began.

"Yes I am." Mary struggled for calm and attained it. "Never more so. What I'm going to say isn't just in a moment of anger. It's the result of weeks of thought. I didn't know how much I had thought until just now; you clarified my thoughts for me by what you have decided to do."

"What do you mean?" David was completely puzzled. It was a new Mary he was facing. Where was the timid little person who had been there a few minutes before? This was a woman who knew her own mind and stood on her own feet before the world.

"Listen to me, David, and you too, Billy. David, I'm going back to Hobansville and I'm going to take Billy with me."

"Yes, I know that dear, and I'll meet you both here when you come back."

"You don't understand, David. I'm not coming back."

"Why, Mary—why, my dear?"

"No, David, I'm not coming back. I have too much self-respect to go on as we have."

"Self-respect! Mary, I don't see——" David was honestly searching for her meaning.

"Yes, David, self-respect. That's just what I mean. I'm through living as the wife of a tennis gigolo."

David jumped to his feet. "Mary!" he cried.

"Sit down, David, and hear me out. I have called you a tennis gigolo and that's just what you are. You are a kept man. You are a parasite, living off Mr. Harker's willingness to exploit your reputation. What do you know of bonds? Nothing. What do you know of any business? Nothing. Can you give business value for the money you receive? No. You give nothing. Economically you are just the same as a kept woman. You are paid for someone else's pleasure and to be exploited at their wishes, to fetch and carry at their beck and call. What was it you said to me? 'Mr. Harker and Arline ordered me.' How can they order you if you are a man standing in your posi-

tion on a sound foundation? No, David, you are a tennis gigolo, paid to dance and play for someone else's profit. And I am the wife of that tennis gigolo."

Her voice broke in a sob. David made a movement toward her. She raised her hand in protest.

"Please! Don't touch me just now. Wait until I've finished. I know that you are not wholly to blame for what has happened. I know that I have much to answer for in the gap that has opened between us."

David attempted to speak, but she went on.

"Oh, yes, my dear, that gap is there and cannot be closed. I know I have disappointed you. I have not learned as you have. I have not fitted into your new life. Somehow I cannot give up my ideals for the sake of being a sportswoman like Arline," a note of bitterness deepened her voice. "I know that many times you have been ashamed of me when I have been thrown into contrast with the brilliant, beautiful women you have met. I have known it and regretted it, but even at that I had to be true to myself.

"All this might have been overcome if I could have retained my self-respect and held my respect for you. But to see you ordered around like a servant, forced to play your great art here, there, and everywhere, because of a few paltry dollars, which were paid you under the pretense of salary, and the big money pocketed by a man whose only interest in you is what you can make for him. That is what robbed me of my respect.

"I didn't realize all I felt until to-night, until you gave up the happiness of your wife and brother, the honor paid you by your old townspeople, because you dared not stand out and say 'No' to the order of your employer and his daughter. Then I knew I had reached my limit. I am through David, definitely through with this life.

"I am going back to Hobansville. I am going to take Billy with me, if he'll come. I'm going to open that gas station we once planned together. I'm going to stand on my own feet, beholden to no one. I want Billy to come because I don't want him to become the spineless parasite you have allowed yourself to

degenerate into. I love you, David." Her voice softened and a sob shook her. "I will always love you. Live this life, David, live it as long as you wish. You know where I am —I will be there always. Come to me if ever you feel I am right and that you want to come. If you do, you will find me waiting with my love still yours. If you do not come, it will not change my love, only fill it with regret at the loss to the world of a man." She rose and walked to her room.

"Mary!" David roused himself from the paralyzing daze in which her words had plunged him.

"No, David, there is nothing more to say. Let it go at that."

"I'll be damned if I will. Now you listen to me," he shouted.

The closing door with its echo as the lock shot into place put a period to his words. He took two strides toward the door, then caught himself.

"Christ!" he cursed and flung himself violently out of the apartment.

Billy jumped up from the sofa. "Dave!" he cried.

There was no answer.

The boy stood gazing alternately at the two closed doors.

"Aw, what the hell——" he whispered.

CHAPTER XXIII

The door closed behind her as Mary's calm shattered in a storm of tears that reached her very soul. She turned the key in the lock and flung herself hysterically on the bed, her breath coming in awful tearing sobs that seemed to strangle her. She had reached her limit. She could stand no more. She could not bear the thought of facing David again that night. She knew she had hurt him terribly, she had hit at the very foundation of his pride, his self-respect, yet she had only said what she honestly believed. She realized now that much of what she had believed was jealousy of Arline Harker was her own love for her husband rebelling at the position in which he allowed himself to be placed, a position in which this girl could order him around with the right of

economic possession. She and her father had bought David's services on and off the court and expected to exact full payment.

Mary knew she could never again live under the same conditions. She would rather slave all day in the tiniest cottage of her own than continue as David's wife under existing conditions. She must make David see how impossible it was for him to go on in the same way. And then the baby! What of its future? How clear it had all seemed to-day before the sudden revelation that had cleared her eyes to the truth of their situation! She could not tell David about the baby now. She knew that he would come with her on the baby's account, and that she would not allow. If he came to her it must be because he felt the hypocrisy of his position, and would no longer live under it. He must come because he was man enough to stand on his own feet, for his sake and his alone, not because he was willing to make a sacrifice for her and her child, afterward always feeling that he was cheated out of his own life. She must go away, back to Hobansville, without letting David know she was bearing his child. Gradually the storm

of emotion passed and she lay quiet. Reaction set in. She slept.

Billy lay awake thinking over what Mary had said. He had been profoundly shaken. It was the first time in his life he had been called upon to face a problem and make his own decision unaided and alone. He had precedent, the unwritten law of "Thou shalt not squeal on a pal" to steer him through his crisis at school. In all other matters he'd always had good old Dave to steer his course for him. Who was right—Dave or Mary? Gosh, Dave was trying his best to make good for Mary; he knew that. Still, it was true that Dave didn't know anything about this bond business; but what difference did that make? He was learning. Still, was he? It did seem as if all he did was chase around to play tennis. Mary was right, Mr. Harker did pay David to play tennis for him. It was just a case of professionalism, hidden under another name. He was paid for playing tennis. The only difference was he was paid only a fraction of what he was worth as a tennis player. Mr. Harker was the one who really made the money that Dave was worth. Gosh, it was all

balled up! Then Dave really didn't seem to have much choice about what he did, Arline or Mr. Harker did sorta order him. Why couldn't he have just stood up and said "No" once and for all to this Vandergriff party and go out with Mary and him to Hobansville? That's what Dave should have done, only he didn't have the guts. What had Mary called him—"a tennis gigolo," a guy who was paid to amuse old ladies, that's what a gigolo was, just a sorta trained puppy, a hell of a guy. Yet he could see the justice of Mary's claim. Gosh, he'd go to Dave in the morning and persuade him to come to Hobansville with them. That would fix it all up and Dave would do it for him. Gee, Mary was right and Dave was wrong. Billy had no intention of ever letting himself get in the same fix Dave was in. He would stick by Mary and pull Dave out. Gosh, it was a funny world, all sorta mixed up.

Billy rolled over and closed his eyes. He'd sort it all out in the morning. He slept.

David walked for miles in a blind rage. Gradually it wore off, leaving him in a daze. He was stunned. He could not grasp the whole thing. Mary, his wife, was going to leave him.

It was impossible. What had happened? What had caused all the riot? Oh, yes, because he wanted to change his plans and go to Vandergriffs' with Arline instead of going to Hobansville with Mary and Billy. Mary was crazy jealous, that was all. How foolish she was! He would prefer in many ways to go to Hobansville with Mary. He enjoyed getting back to his old friends. It was largely business that made him want to go to Vandergriffs', and then, too, the bridge, cocktails and the smart crowd would be lots of fun. Still, if the business didn't come into it he would not have considered it. Women never understand business; Mary thought he was being paid just for tennis. "A tennis gigolo," she called him. That was unfair, especially as he had taken this position at her request. In fact he had let her make the decision; she had almost forced him into it, and now she blamed him. That was the illogical attitude of women to their husbands, he supposed.

She had said he had no self-respect, that he allowed himself to be ordered around without courage to stand up and say "No." Ridiculous! All he did was to attempt to please Mr.

Harker, his employer, and Arline, his employer's daughter. It cost him no self-respect. Mary was right when she said there were times he was ashamed of her, and to-night was one of them. His dazed attitude was rapidly changing into one of indignation. Why should Mary have such a superior attitude? She had been proud enough of his reputation and glad to accept her position as the wife of the world's champion.

She had said she was going to leave him, but that was all rot. She may have thought she meant it to-night, but by morning she would be all over that idea. He had a momentary desire to return and tell her he would go to Hobansville with her after all, but then he decided he couldn't afford to risk angering the Harkers, and then too it would not do to let Mary see she could score him. He would show her this time who ruled the Cooper family. David had argued himself into believing he had been unjustly treated by Mary. Well, he might just as well get some sleep. He gazed around him. He was standing in Times Square, the full blaze of electric light glaring down on him. He'd go back to bed. He walked back to

the Vanderbilt Hotel, his anger cooled, his mind more at rest. He let himself quietly into the apartment. He tried the door of their room. It was locked. His first impulse was to knock until Mary let him in. Then he remembered the extra bed in Billy's room. He tiptoed to the door and looked in. The kid was sound asleep. What was the use of waking Mary and staging another big row at that hour of the night? He'd sleep in Billy's room. He slipped quietly in, and undressing in the dark crawled into bed. He fell asleep at once.

CHAPTER XXIV

MARY did not appear for breakfast the next morning. Billy and David finished their breakfast without alluding to the events of the previous evening. David lit a cigarette and settled back in his chair.

"Say, kid, better see if Mary wants anything," he said. "I'm afraid I'm not too popular with her just now."

Billy moved uneasily in his chair. It wasn't as easy to talk to Dave as he had thought it would be when he decided to do it last night.

"Dave," he blurted out, "you are going to Hobansville with us, aren't you?"

"No, Billy, I'm not, and for the Lord's sake don't rake that over the coals again."

"I don't mean to do that, Dave, but, gee, you ought to come. Honest! It's Mary's

birthday and everything—I don't blame her for feeling sore."

"She has no right to feel sore. She's not fair to me." David had convinced himself that he was badly treated in the whole affair.

"Aw, gee, Dave, I think she has." Billy's sense of justice was outraged.

"Now, listen kid, you are too young to know anything about it. Forget it, and go see if Mary wants anything."

"Wait a minute, Dave. I'm not too young to know what's fair. You are not treating Mary fairly."

"Is that so?" David was sick of the subject. "Thanks for the news."

"You're not, and you know it. Why do you have to go to Vandergriffs' instead of with us?"

"Because of business. Mr. Harker and Arline want me to; they said so."

"Is that so terribly important, Dave?"

"Of course it is. Cut out arguing, Billy. You don't understand."

Billy rose to his feet and took a deep breath. "Dave," he said firmly, "I'm going to Hobansville with Mary."

"Oh, for God's sake—of course you are, and you're both coming back here to sail for Europe next Wednesday."

"No, you don't get me, Dave. I'm staying in Hobansville with Mary. You don't really think she's coming back, do you?"

"Don't be a fool, Billy; certainly she's coming back."

"Maybe, Dave, but I don't think so. Gee, Dave, it's awful tough—I hate to say it, but Mary's right in all she said last night. She's right and you're wrong."

"Oh, you think so too, do you?" David rose to his feet and started to pace the room.

"Yes, Dave, I do. You are coming home with us, aren't you?" A note of pleading crept into the boy's voice.

"No, I'm not. You can do what you want, Billy. Go with Mary and stay with her if you want to. God knows I don't want you with me if you believe all the things about me that she seems to. No, or her either. I'll be glad. Go on, make your own decision."

"Thanks, Dave. I have made it; I'm going with Mary."

"Aw, go to hell if you want."

The door of Mary's room opened and she came out, dressed for the street, her handbag in her hand. She came up to David and held out her hand.

"Good-bye," she said simply.

"Why, Mary——" he gasped. "Why—where are you going?"

"Home," she said quietly.

"But you can't go like this."

"This is the only way to go. Are you coming with me, Billy?"

The boy shot a rapid glance at David. Why didn't he tell Mary he was coming to Hobansville with them? the youngster wondered. Even yet he could not believe David would be such a fool as to let them go alone. The man made no move, only stood by the table silent, watching.

"Yes, Mary, I'll be ready in a minute."

Billy ran to his room for his bag. He had packed it the previous day. He was ready to go.

"David," he heard Mary's voice, "I will send for the rest of my things, and Billy's too."

"Very well." David's voice was cold and harsh.

Billy pulled on his coat, and grabbing his hat, hurried out.

"I'm ready, Mary. Come on, Dave, you're coming with us, aren't you?"

"No, Billy."

The boy felt a lump rising in his throat. He swallowed hastily and blinked his eyes. It wouldn't do to cry now. He marched up to David and put out his hand.

"Good-bye, Dave," he said huskily.

His brother's hand did not find his, but fell on his shoulder.

"Good-bye, kid, behave yourself." David gave him a gentle shove.

Blindly Billy walked to the door and opened it, his eyes swimming.

Mary walked to the door. David was still standing by the table. He had not moved.

"Good-bye, David." She spoke with perfect calm, her voice steady. "You know where I am—if you ever want me." She passed out, Billy at her side, the door closing quietly behind them.

With the gentle sound of its closing David made an impulsive movement toward it. He couldn't let them go like that. Then pride

caught him, mounting anger swelled within him. He wouldn't stop them. They could go to the ends of the world for all he cared. He was through! He was free, free to live his life! By God, he'd live it to the utmost! Thank God he was free!

CHAPTER XXV

Mary's return to Hobansville with Billy but without David created a sensation. She and the boy moved into the Coopers' old home with just as little show as possible. Naturally there was a good deal of talk, but Mary simply said David had gone to Europe to play tennis, while she had decided to remain home, and preferred to live in her own town until he returned. She did everything possible to save both David and herself. She cautioned Billy to say nothing about a quarrel. She told the whole truth only to her father and mother. Even to them she did not speak of the coming of the baby. She was taking no chances of that news reaching David before he had sailed. Mary had a small income of her own, not much, but enough to run her home on very economical lines. She intended to start in

business for herself with the gas station, as she and David had always planned as soon as she could do so. Maybe her father would lend her enough to cover the original outlay. She determined to stand on her own feet and make her own living in some way.

Billy went back to Hobansville High School. Mary insisted that he complete his education and turned a deaf ear to his pleas to be allowed to go to work and help earn money. Time enough for that when he had his education. She knew that David had always insisted that Billy have his chance, and she was going to see that he got it. Each day for the week that succeeded her return Mary hoped for word from David, but nothing came.

She knew that he was to sail for Europe the end of that week, and hoped against hope that he might change his mind. The morning after he was to sail she read in the paper the bare announcement that "David Cooper, the world's tennis champion, sailed on the *Olympic* for France. Mr. Cooper was accompanied by Mr. Randolph Harker, the financier and his daughter, Miss Arline Harker, the famous society belle and sportswoman."

So he had really sailed! Gone without a word! The front-door bell rang. Billy, just leaving for school, opened the door. It was the postman. The boy took the two or three letters, glancing down at them as he came toward her.

"Gee, Mary, here's a letter from Dave." The joy in the boy's voice was wonderful to hear.

"Let me have it quickly, Billy."

So he hadn't left without a word. At least he had written her good-bye.

Billy looked embarrassed.

"It's for me, Mary," he said. "I'm sorry."

"Oh!" Mary sat, crushed at the disappointment.

Billy tore open the letter. From its folds a check fell out, to lie unheeded on the table in front of him. He ran his eye eagerly over the letter, then a cloud settled over his face.

"Listen," he said. "I'll read it to you.

"DEAR BILLY:

"Just a word of good-bye to you as I sail to Europe. I'm sorry you are not with me, but I guess you are happier where you are. Try to complete your year in school, and remember, even

though we are not together, I am counting on you to make good at whatever you do.

"Please give the enclosed check to Mary. Tell her I am arranging to have the same sent her each month. It's the best I can do. I wish it were more.

"There is nothing I can say to you, except that no matter where I am,

"I am always,

"Your loving brother,

"DAVE."

Billy stopped reading and picked up the check. It was drawn to him and was for two hundred dollars. He handed it to Mary.

She shook her head.

"Nothing more, not a word of good-bye for me?"

"That's all he says, Mary."

She turned away her head.

"Here's the check." Billy handed it to her again. "I'll endorse it now."

"No, Billy," she said firmly. "I won't touch it."

"But you must. It's mine, too, and I want you to. Dave sent it to me. I want you to take it."

"No, Billy, I'm sorry, but I can't. I can't

let David spend money on me. I'll tell you. We will deposit it in the bank for you and you can pay your school out of it, and for your clothes. It's right that David should do that for you, but I can't have it used for me."

"Please, Mary, won't you do it for me?"

"No, dear. We will let it drop now. It's all settled. Now you run along to school."

Billy bent and kissed her.

"I wish you would—Mary. . . . Oh, all right, anything you say. Good-bye, see you tonight," and out he plunged. She heard his voice in the street: "Heh, Alice, wait a minute, can't yuh? What's the rush?"

She gathered up the letters, and glanced down at the check in her hand.

"Sailed—without even a good-bye," she murmured aloud; and turned to her duties of clearing the table.

CHAPTER XXVI

David sailed for Europe filled with a wild anticipation for the coming season and a sense of freedom that almost blotted out the regret he felt at leaving Mary and Billy behind. He faced the coming season with a new point of view. Much as he had loved Mary, he believed she had killed his love forever by her unjust attitude to him and her unwarranted jealousy of Arline. There was no question but that they were completely unsuited. She did not understand him. She never had understood him from the day they were married and had come East to live. He couldn't understand now how he could have imagined back in Hobansville that they would be happy. She cared nothing for life, society, sport. She had shamed him repeatedly. How different from Arline! What a girl Arline was! How could he

have ever thought her aloof and unattainable. How sympathetic, sweet, and comforting she had been when she had learned of his trouble. She didn't blame him, nor had she blamed Mary. She was too good a sport for that. She had just pointed out how unsuited he and Mary had been and agreed it was for the best all around. It was wonderful to have a woman around who understood that way. He glowed at the thought of Arline. He was off for a season abroad with her and her father, that great man who had given him his chance to become something in the world, off for a trip that would not be marred by his wife making social and sporting breaks, or by her foolish jealousy of Arline. Thank God, if the break had to come, as he felt now had been inevitable, it had come before the start of this trip. He was sorry not to have Billy along. He would have enjoyed playing doubles with the boy, and then, too, Billy was a swell kid, a boy who would grow up to be a sportsman and a man of the world if he were given the chance. Maybe he had made a mistake by not insisting on Billy coming with him. Still the boy could finish his school year in Hobans-

ville and be out of trouble while David would not be burdened with the responsibility for him during his important tennis. Then, too, David intended to see a little more of the social life of London and Paris this year, since he did not have Mary to hold him back. He would not have wanted Billy alone on these parties. The kid was a bit too young. Yes, all in all, everything had worked out for the best. There was no question but that his marriage with Mary was destined to go on the rocks, and since that was so, it was better to have it break up while they were both young and could begin life over. Thank God they had no children to be affected! It was always tough on kids when their parents separated, but at least in his and Mary's case this problem didn't enter in. If they had remained together, he had wanted children. He loved youngsters and had always looked forward to the day when he would have his own home and family; but, thank God, now this did not exist! Maybe sometime, somewhere, in the future, this might come true, only he could not visualize it now with Mary and himself. Why worry about all that now? He was going

abroad to play tennis and to have a good time. He intended to make this trip a success.

What a trip it turned out to be! From the first tournament of the Riviera until the last match for the Davis Cup, David Cooper was the sensation of the tennis world. Great player that he had been recognized the previous year, his record on this trip set a new standard. He was unanimously acclaimed, not only world's champion, but the greatest player of all time. The French, German, and Dutch championships were his with ease. He successfully defended at Wimbledon and crowned his European season with such dazzling play in the Davis Cup matches that single-handed he won three matches and brought the cup back to the United States. He returned to America just long enough successfully to defend his American crown, immediately following which he left for a tour of Australia, Japan, and South Africa, returning early the following spring to the Riviera and back to the Continent to defend his major championship. The Harkers accompanied him on his entire tour. Mr. Harker had found that with David as an opening wedge, he could make business

connections of great value in all the countries he visited, with the result that his business was expanding by leaps and bounds. David and Arline had come to a definite understanding, although how it had grown up, neither one could quite explain. Each knew that some day, when David had divorced Mary, they were to be married. Just when this would take place was still very vague. David had taken no steps toward such an action. He had been assured it could be accomplished in Paris whenever he had the time and inclination to start proceedings. David imagined himself in love with Arline. Their proximity over the long trip, coupled with their mutual interest in sport, and a definite physical attraction which each felt for the other, was the basis for an attachment that neither had probed very deeply.

Back in Hobansville, David's sensational triumphs had been followed closely by Mary and Billy. Each was tremendously proud of David's achievements. yet neither said much about him.

Mary's baby was born in August. Some months before the baby was due, she had told

Billy of its coming and sworn him on his honor not to tell David in his letters. The baby was a boy whom Mary insisted on naming David, notwithstanding the pleadings of her father and mother for any other name. Both Mary and the boy had rather a difficult time, but by early winter both were in the best of health. Billy was crazy about his nephew, and only his most heroic efforts at self-restraint kept him from spilling the whole story to David each time he wrote. David's allowance to Mary and Billy arrived each month regularly and was deposited in bank. Mary insisted on Billy using it for himself as needed, but steadfastly refused to touch one cent for herself. The result was that Master Cooper was rapidly becoming a moneyed man.

Mary's parents were distinctly upset by the situation of their daughter. They urged her to take steps towards a legal separation and divorce. Mary would not listen to it for a moment.

"No," she would say firmly, "David is my husband and I love him. I didn't leave him because my love had died. I left him to make him recognize his situation and become a

man. Some day he may see my viewpoint and come to me. If he does, I must be waiting for him, just as I left him—no, not quite the same, for there's little David, but my love will be the same."

"Are you sure you did the right thing?" her mother would ask for the hundredth time.

"Yes, Mother dear," Mary would say. "Yes. There is only one thing I see now that I didn't before. David belongs to the world, as any great artist belongs to the world. He is a great artist in his line. I should not expect him to give up his tennis. All I must expect of him is for him to be free to stand on his own feet and not to allow people to order him around. However, why should I expect anything? I may never see him again."

It was from Australia that the first hint of the affair between David and Arline reached Mary. It was a news note cabled from Sydney which read: "Dame rumor links the name of David Cooper, the world's tennis champion, with that of Miss Arline Harker, the American society girl, with whom he has been playing mixed doubles throughout Australia. It is said Mr. Cooper, who is married, is instituting

divorce proceedings in Paris immediately on arrival, and will wed Miss Harker at once on the divorce becoming final."

Mary read it with a queer constricted feeling round her heart. It couldn't be! Arline and David—ah, God, no! She could never make him happy. He didn't love her; he couldn't. David loved her, Mary. She had always been sure of that. She never doubted but that some day he would come back to her—and little David. Little David whom he had never seen—and might now never see.

She bowed her head in her hands. Was this to be the end of her battle? Was she to lose without a chance to fight for herself? The tears trickled slowly between her fingers and dropped silently in her lap.

CHAPTER XXVII

David and the Harkers were in Paris. It was early May. It was a year and a half since he had sailed for Europe, leaving Billy and Mary behind. A year and a half! It didn't seem that long in some ways, yet in others it seemed centuries.

Paris in May!

The beauty, the joy of life that is Paris in May! Where else in the world is there such a spirit of love, of youth, romance? The flowers, the music, the moonlight, the very language and spirit of France breathes of spring and love. Everywhere one saw happiness, gayety, beauty. Yet David was unhappy. He could not understand his mood. He had had more than a year of the life he loved, a year of beautiful, brilliant women making him the centre of their attention, a year when influential men

had showered honors upon him, a year when crowned heads had applauded his play and heaped personal congratulations on him, a year in the company of Arline, the girl he believed he loved, yet somehow something was missing. The old kick was gone. He got no thrill out of his triumphs: they seemed empty, vapid, a waste of time. He was sick of the sight of the brilliant lights and sparkling wine in the cafés, he was sick of the foolish women who gushed around him, he was sick of Arline—yes, he hated to admit it, but he was sick even of her. Above all he hated tennis, this game that dragged him all over the world. He wished to God he could sit quiet for a day, quiet in his own home, with nothing to do but talk to Billy. Billy! He was a swell kid. He wondered what the boy was doing and if he'd grown much. Billy's letters had been few and rather unsatisfactory. They didn't tell him much about Hobansville, and never mentioned Mary. Mary! Just two years ago they had been in Paris together. How excited they had both been, and what a kick they got out of seeing the Arc de Triomphe the first time.

A knock on the door roused him.

"Come in," he called.

Arline walked in.

"Hello, dear." She ran to him and kissed him, mussing his hair, and sitting on the arm of his chair while she ran her fingers around his head.

God, if only she'd let him alone! He didn't want to be pawed over, and it seemed to him that lately Arline was always pawing him. Mary never used to paw him.

"Oh, Davikins, I've made a date for us to dine at Les Ambassadeurs to-night, and then go from there to Florence's and maybe wind up at Le Chat Noir after that. Most of the gang will be there; you know, just an all night-brawl."

"Arline, for heaven's sake stop calling me Davikins. I feel like a Billikins doll or something. I don't want to go out to-night. It's getting too close to the championships for all-night parties."

"Oh, David, you're getting to be a regular old fogy. All right—no more after to-night."

"But I don't want to go to-night."

"Well, you must. I've made the date and it's all settled."

"But Arline——"

She bent and kissed him quickly and rose from the arm of his chair.

"Now don't argue, Davikins. It's all settled and you're going. Ta, ta—see you at eight," and she was out of the door and was gone.

David glanced at his watch. It was six o'clock. He had an hour and a half before he needed to dress. He felt stifled in the hotel. Why the hell did Arline get on his nerves this way? He couldn't stand this "Davikins" stuff, and why did she need to maul him? He grabbed a hat and went out.

He hailed a taxi.

"Drive through the Bois," he directed.

He sat in sulky calm watching the crowds that walked the Avenue Marshal Foch. Not a familiar face. How he would have loved to see a face from Hobansville! God, he was a long way from home! How he hated this life! What was he doing, anyway, to justify his existence? Nothing, except swat a hunk of rubber, covered with felt, across a fish net with the aid of a piece of wood strung with the insides of a lamb. That was a hell of a life for a full-grown man. By God! Mary had

been right when she said he was just paid to play tennis. To hell with the game!

He looked up. He was passing one of the lakes in the Bois. He stopped the taxi.

"I'll get out here," he said, and paid his fare.

He walked down along the side of the lake. A canoe drifted past. A girl and boy, oblivious of the rest of the world, were seated in it. The girl laughed a happy little laugh. The boy bent and kissed her on the lips.

A wave of loneliness swept David. Why the hell was everyone else in the world happy except him? He looked at the sparkling water with its shifting colors, shimmering in the sunset glow. Across from the Cascades Café drifted the sound of languorous melody. It was beautiful. He ought to be happy. What was missing?

From almost at his feet came a sudden loud "quack" followed by many little "peepings." A mother duck and her brood, disturbed by his approach, swam hastily and indignantly away. Even the duck was happy with her family. He laughed. It wakened a memory of the old mill pond in Hobansville where he

and Mary used to walk so often in the evenings before they were married. Ah, how happy he had been in those days! There was none of this awful rush, strain, and bustle, no one to hurry him out to parties, or call him "Davikins," or—oh, God, why had he ever left it? Why couldn't he go back? Yes, why couldn't he? Mary was waiting for him back there in Hobansville! So was Billy. Then like a flash came the thought: Arline is waiting at the hotel in Paris. A wild flare of anger toward her filled David's whole being. He felt caught in the net of his fame and his glory, a net cleverly woven around him and drawn tight by Arline Harker. He didn't love this girl. She didn't love him, all she cared for was his tennis and his attention. She wanted him as her tennis gigolo. Mary had called him that and she was right. He knew it now. He did not love Arline. He never had. It was Mary he loved, Mary his wife. He had always loved her, only he had been too damned stupid to see it. What a fool he had been! But he was awake now. He'd go back to Mary, go back on his knees if necessary, beg her forgiveness, tell her she was right and he was wrong, tell

her he was through with tennis for ever, through with the society life to which he didn't belong. He knew at last he was a small-town man, and belonged in a small town. He would resign his position with Mr. Harker, he would burn his racquets and default his titles. He must get out of this net of glory.

He would go home!

He raised his head. The world seemed smiling at him. The music across the water no longer held loneliness. It sang of life and love. Out on the lake the mother duck and her brood still swam in happiness. David grinned at them.

"Thanks," he called to the duck, to the infinite surprise of a bystander who thought the poor man was probably crazy.

"Taxi!" he called. "George V Hotel."

CHAPTER XXVIII

David went directly to his own room when he arrived at the hotel. He sat down at his desk and wrote a formal resignation of his position to Mr. Harker. Then he telephoned to the head porter to inquire about sailings. He found that the *Ile de France* left Cherbourg the following day, the boat-train left Paris at nine o'clock in the morning. If he hurried he could just make it. Eagerly he pulled open the drawers of his dressing table, preparatory to packing. All thoughts of his dinner engagement with Arline had left his mind.

A knock on his sitting-room door roused him.

"Come in!" he called.

The door opened and in floated Arline, beautiful in the latest Parisian creation which she had just acquired.

"All ready, Davikins," she called as she came in. Then she saw him, still in his street clothes. Her face fell, and a petulant pout marred her beauty.

"David! Not dressed! We ought to be leaving now!"

"No, Arline. I'm not going out to-night."

"Now don't be silly, David, of course you're going. Hurry up and dress."

"I'm sorry, Arline, but I'm not. I have a great many things to do to-night. I must have a serious talk to you."

"Very well, Davikins. You can talk to me on our way, only for the Lord's sake get dressed and don't keep me waiting any longer."

"Don't you understand I'm not coming with you, Arline?"

"No, I don't. I never will. You must come—I insist!" Arline was growing really angry.

"Now please don't start that." David held his temper in check with difficulty. He could not stand much more of Arline's arrogance in his present mood.

"I'll start anything I want to!" Arline was furious. "If I tell you to come to-night, you

must come. What will people say if you don't? You know both Father and I owe something to the people we are going to see. You must come."

"I'm not coming, and that ends it!"

"It certainly does." Arline's face was flushed with anger. "It ends it with me for ever. Who are you to tell me what you will and won't do? You are nothing but a common hick from a small town. We, my father and I, have made you. Where would you have been if it hadn't been for us?"

David opened his mouth to speak, but Arline imperiously silenced him with a gesture.

"Don't waste breath talking to me. I have no interest in you. How could I ever have been fool enough to imagine myself in love with you? In love with you! Certainly not. You have been useful in your way, but now I see how impossible the situation is. I never want to see you again."

She walked to the door.

"Arline!" David's voice was quiet. "I feel I must tell you something. You should know it."

She turned in the doorway.

"I have no interest in your explanation. If my wishes are not of sufficient importance to you to carry them out, I need no explanation."

The door closed firmly behind her. She was gone.

David stood silent, waiting, waiting for her return which he feared. A feeling of relief, of freedom stole over him. He was free, free by Arline's own words. She had said it was all over. She never wanted to see him again. She had said it voluntarily, with no idea he was going away, back home to Mary. It was simply a case with her that the moment her wishes were crossed, her will thwarted, she had no more use for the person who did not bow to her desires. She was simply a spoiled child, shallow, superficial, not worthy of dignifying by anger.

He was free! Free of Arline and Mr. Harker. Free to go home to Mary. He turned back to his room, and opening his trunk, began piling in his clothes.

Arline was so furious when she left David that she had no thought of tears. She would show him it made no difference to her whether or not he came with her to-night. She tele-

phoned to the Carlton Hotel and asked for Mr. Fred Allen. Mr. Allen was a young American who for three years had been a most devoted admirer of Arline's but one who was inclined to bore her by his obvious attention and love. To-night she felt she could stand a little of his devotion to heal the wound to her vanity inflicted by David.

A short conversation and Fred was on his way to the George V Hotel to pick up Arline. All through the evening Arline fought against a growing melancholy. What a fool she had been to lose her temper and say such awful things to David! She had even said it was all over between them and she never wanted to see him again. God, how crazy she was when she lost her temper! Never see him again! She loved him and always would. She would go to him in the morning and, although she wouldn't apologize, she would be so nice to him that he would understand and forgive her. She turned to Allen with a smile, suddenly realizing he had asked her the same question three times.

"Yes," she said, not knowing to what. He smiled at her.

"You don't really mean that, do you?" he said.

"What do you mean?" she inquired.

"I might have asked you to marry me! Would you have said 'yes' to that."

"Fred, be sensible!"

"Would you, dear?" he whispered under cover of the conversation around the table.

"No, Fred, you know I wouldn't."

"Then you didn't mean that 'yes' a minute ago."

"Did you ask me to marry you?"

"No; I asked you if you were going to England or Holland after the French Championships, and you said 'Yes.'"

"Fred, you're incorrigible. We are going first to Holland, and then England, so my 'yes' was correct to both. Pour me some more champagne."

Arline reached home at five A.M. after quite an evening. She was dog-tired. Her last waking thought was of David. She would be up for lunch with him to-morrow.

She woke at twelve noon. She ordered breakfast, then took up the telephone and called David's rooms. There was a short pause

and the operator's voice came over the wire.

"Whom do you wish to speak with, Miss Harker?"

"Mr. Cooper, of course," Arline replied.

The operator sounded surprised.

"Mr. Cooper checked out of the hotel at eight-thirty this morning."

Arline placed the receiver carefully back on the hook. David checked out of the hotel that morning! There was some mistake. This was impossible! He couldn't have done that. He couldn't have taken her seriously last night. She hadn't meant what she said. Oh, God, she hadn't meant it!

"Dad! Oh, Dad!" she called wildly. No answer came from the sitting room; she was alone in the suite. A feeling of relief came over her; possibly David was with her father. She would find out. She jumped from bed and began feverishly to dress.

The door into the sitting room was flung violently open, a man's heavy footsteps sounded coming toward her door. She caught up her kimono and pulled it around her. Possibly it was David, come to make peace.

A knock on her door, and her father's voice, harsh with excitement, reached her.

"Arline, let me in at once!"

She sprang to open the door.

Mr. Harker strode in, a letter in his hand. He gesticulated wildly with it.

"What the hell is the meaning of this!"

He thrust the note into her face. She seized it and read it eagerly. It was David's formal resignation from the Harker company, to take effect immediately.

She looked wildly at her father.

"Where is he? Oh, Dad, where is he?—I must find him!"

"He checked out of the hotel this morning, taking all his luggage with him. He left no forwarding address and no message except this. He has completely disappeared."

A low moan rose from Arline's lips as she sank on the bed.

"It's my fault, Dad, my fault. Last night, because he refused to go with me on that party, I told him I never wanted to see him again. I didn't mean it. I love him. Ah, I love him so."

Mr. Harker gently patted the sobbing girl's shoulder.

"Don't worry, dear, we will say nothing about this at present and he will turn up for the championship. Everything will turn out all right. It's just a misunderstanding."

He walked silently to the door.

The low sobs, heart-breaking in their pathos, were the only sound in the room. He glanced back at the girl, then stole out, closing the door silently behind him.

Arline raised a tear-stained face. She was like a small child who in a fit of temper has thrown away its favorite plaything. "David," she sobbed. "I love him so."

* * *

On the stern of the top deck of the *Ile de France*, David Cooper watched the shores of France receding into the Channel mist, as the great liner plowed its way toward England and the United States.

Peace such as he had not known for more than two years had settled on him. His future seemed clear-cut once more. He was going

home to Mary, back to Hobansville and the life to which he was born. Problems still faced him, but he felt a serene confidence in his ability to meet them. He and Mary would mold their life together in Hobansville. No more tennis, no more world tours in the future. Just a home, happiness, and, he hoped, some day, children. Then there was Billy! David faced a problem in Billy. The boy would be a far greater tennis player some day than he himself. Was he right to allow the boy to plunge into this game which had so jumbled his life? Billy might be caught in glory's net just as he had been. Billy might become a tennis gigolo. Had he a right to let the boy run this risk? Yet, against that, Billy was to become a great player far younger than he had been. The boy would not have his economic future to consider quite so seriously for a few years.

David was convinced he could do well enough to give Billy his big chance in tennis for a few years before the boy had to buckle down to work. Then, too, Billy had seen the trouble the game had caused in his own brother's life by the loss of perspective on

sport and its place in the world. Billy would have the advantage of the splendid education at St. Bernard's, a cultural advantage that would fit him for the life in the world of sport.

David gazed back once more at France, now fast disappearing astern.

His decision was made. He would send Billy back to St. Bernard's next year and then, if possible, send him through Yale. He would let the boy play tennis through school and college, possibly a year or two longer if he could. He would attempt to give back to the United States in Billy the champion of the world which he took away by his retirement. He and Mary would live their life in Hobansville and he would have his tennis career in Billy.

He drew a long breath and turned toward the companionway leading to his cabin.

He smiled happily.

He was going home.

CHAPTER XXIX

David Cooper landed in New York the day the French Championship commenced in Paris. He had not notified the French Tennis Association of his departure, so no word of his return to the United States had preceded him. He had made the *Ile de France* by the narrowest margin, so his name did not appear on the passenger list and no reporters were aware of his arrival. He passed the customs, and was off the dock without any of the press learning of his return.

The sensation of his unheralded default broke that day from Paris. The press carried a scare-head all over the United States. Such headlines as—

American Champion Defaults.
Noted Net Star Disappears.
David Cooper, Tennis Champion, Lost

filled the press of the United States.

David read them with amusement as he sat in the Twentieth Century Limited bound for Chicago, *en route* to Hobansville. He knew Mr. Harker would explain to the French, and as far as the rest went he didn't care. He'd do his own explaining to Billy and Mary. With every mile that passed he grew more impatient. Each familiar landmark cried out to him:

"You're going home, David, home to Mary."

He could hardly bring himself to sleep, so eager was he to watch his progress.

Mary and Billy saw the announcements of David's unexplained default and disappearance in the afternoon Chicago papers that reached Hobansville at dinner time. It shook them both. It was not like David to do a thing like that. Something serious must have happened. Why didn't the Harkers cable or something? David must have met with an accident, or been murdered or something. Poor Mary was almost crazy. She blamed herself for allowing David to go to Europe without her. She pictured him undergoing the most terrible tortures as a prisoner in some

underworld dive in Paris. She remembered all the lurid stories she had ever heard of the Paris underworld. Poor Billy, scared almost to death himself, did his best to comfort her. Morning came, and with it the morning paper. It brought no news. Mr. Harker had been reached, and beyond confirming David's default had declined to make any statement.

"Billy," announced Mary after breakfast, "if no news comes by evening I am going to New York to see if I can learn anything from the Tennis Association."

"But, gee, Mary, what about the baby and me?"

"You can both go down to Mother's. I'll take little David there now, and after school you can come down. I'll meet you here after school and fix your things. I hope it will be only for a few days."

Billy had hard work keeping his mind on his school work that day. David's disappearance was the topic of the hour. By noon Billy could stand no more of the curiosity, and received permission to go home.

David's train arrived in Chicago at ten in the morning, connecting with a train that put

him in Hobansville at one-thirty. He alighted at the station to find no one except the station master present. The old man almost had apoplexy at the sight of David, but the latter gave him no chance for conversation by jumping into the one taxi of which the town could boast. All he wanted was to see Mary as soon as possible. He had no time for others until then.

Billy heard the taxi draw up in front of the house and ran to the door. He thought Mary was getting pretty swell coming over from her parents' home by taxi. He opened the door just as David ran up the steps.

"Billy!"

"Dave—oh, Dave!"

Billy was swept off his feet and into the air in the bear-hug of David's greeting.

"Oh, boy, I'm glad to see you."

"Dave, oh, gee—we thought you were killed or something."

"No, Billy, I'm here. Where's—Mary?"

"She's out, she's down at her mother's."

"I'll go down."

"She'll be here in a minute, Dave. Oh, gee, I'm glad you're safe."

"I'm O.K. Is Mary well?" David strode over to Billy and affectionately ruffled his hair.

"David! Oh, David!"

He turned. Mary stood swaying in the doorway.

"Oh, my darling!" He rushed to her, his arms reaching for her.

She put out a hand in protest.

"Please, David, wait. Oh, my dear, you are safe."

He swept her defenses aside and took her in his arms.

"Yes, dearest, safe and back home."

He raised her face to his and kissed her passionately. Billy squirmed on one foot.

"Gee, I think I'll go tell the gang you're not murdered!" he said. "Gosh, Dave, it's swell to see you again!" and was gone.

David lifted Mary in his arms and bore her into the living room to his big armchair.

"What happened, David?" She nestled close to him.

"Nothing, dear, except that I woke up! Woke up to what a fool I was."

"Not a fool, David—just foolish."

"No, sweetheart, a fool. Anybody's a fool who loses his perspective on life, whose sense of value is lost. That's what happened to me. I'm a small-town man, dearest, and belong in a small town. I have no place in this tennis game. You were right in all you said. I had lost my self-respect in my desire to toady to Mr. Harker and Arline."

Mary moved slightly in his arms.

"What about Arline?" she whispered.

"There is nothing between Arline and me. There never has been. I thought," he paused, "I was fool enough to imagine once I loved her, but I didn't. I know that now. I have never loved anyone but you."

"David!" she murmured.

"I have thought this all out. I have given up my position with Mr. Harker; I'm going to stay here in Hobansville with you and Billy. We will open our gas station and call it Champion Inn, and sell automobiles and run a garage. That's a business I know something about. And I'm through with tennis—I've played my last match. I'll never play again."

"No, David dear, you are wrong to say

that." Mary's hand stole around his neck. "You must play. You owe it to your country, to the game, and to us."

"Why, Mary, I thought——" he began.

"I was wrong, David, just as you were wrong. We each went too far. Tennis should not be your whole life, but on the other hand it has its place. You are an artist in your line. Any artist belongs to his country and to the world. The United States needs you in the Davis Cup matches for many years. You must play for your country. You see, David, now you will play as your own master. No longer will you be in a position where your whole earning power depends on tennis, and your employer is using your reputation for his own ends. You are a man, standing on your own feet, playing when and where you can, playing of your own free will for the good of your country and for the game. I'll be proud to go with you as the wife of such a man."

"Mary, dearest! Then it's a partnership, you and I, on and off the court?"

"Yes, dearest, on and off the court."

He kissed her tenderly, and rose.

"Oh, David, come with me to Mother's.

I want them to know you're home, and I want you to know someone there."

"Who?"

"Oh, someone."

Hand in hand they walked down the quiet village street to her mother's home.

On the porch she stopped David.

"Sit down and wait for me." She pushed him into a chair and ran into the house.

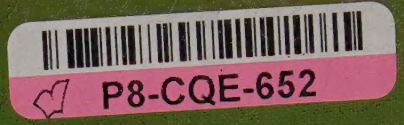
A moment more her voice came to him from the hall.

"David!"

He rose and walked to the door. Before he reached it it swung open. In the door stood Mary, in her arms a lusty, smiling, pink-cheeked baby.

"Mr. David Cooper," said Mary gravely, "I want you to know Mr. David Cooper, junior."

THE END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